THE American Scholar

WINTER 1971-72 Price $1.75

WILLIAM JOVANOVICH
A Tumult of Talk

BENJAMIN DeMOTT
The One Right Way to Write and Think?

GERALD W. JOHNSON
Hannibal for President

RENE DUBOS
The Despairing Optimist

GERALD HOLTON
On Trying to Understand Scientific Genius

ANTHONY BURGESS
Letter From Europe

IRVING HOWE
Literary Criticism and Literary Radicals

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cornell University Press

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

The Major Novels

By ABRAHAM ROTHBERG. This powerfully written critique of the major novels of the 1970 Nobel Prize winner for literature emphasizes their importance as political statements as well as their significance as works of art. Mr. Rothberg includes a biographical sketch of Solzhenitsyn, and single chapters are devoted to *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *The First Circle*, and *Cancer Ward*. A final chapter assesses Solzhenitsyn as a writer and as a symbol of heroic dissent. Solzhenitsyn emerges as a bold, vigorous, uncompromising writer who uses his great talents to fight for enlightenment and freedom. $7.50

Zoo, or Letters Not about Love

By VIKTOR SHKLOVSKY. Edited and translated from the Russian by Richard Sheldon. When this experimental epistolary novel was first published in 1923, Viktor Shklovsky was living as an exile in Berlin after the turbulent years of revolution in his native Russia. On its simplest level, *Zoo* is a story of unrequited love, but it is also a deeply felt commentary on the pain of banishment and rootlessness. The letters cover a wide range of topics—observations on contemporary Berlin and Russia, digressions on art and literature, thumbnail portraits of famous Russian writers and artists, including Andrei Bely, Ilya Ehrenburg, Marc Chagall, and Boris Pasternak. $7.95

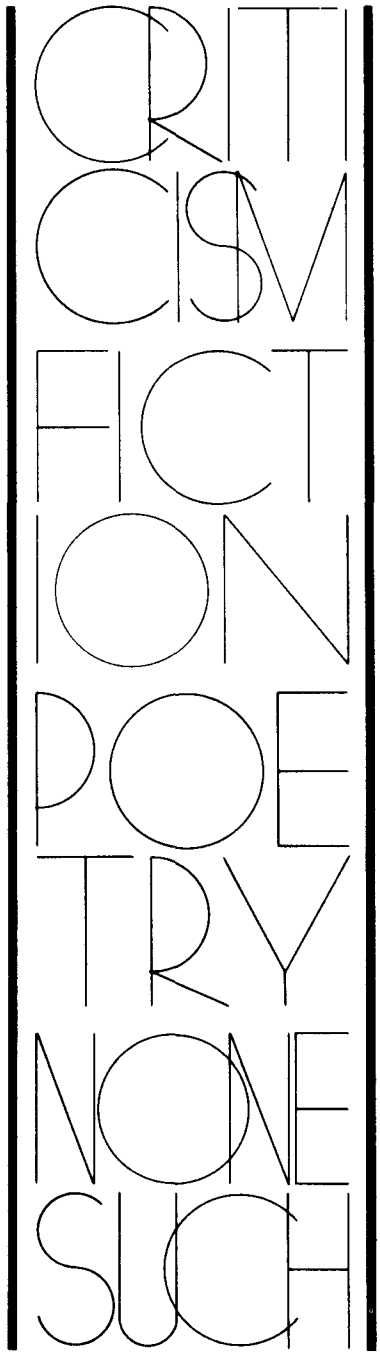
Russia's Lost Literature of the Absurd

A Literary Discovery

Selected Works of DANIIL KHARMS and ALEXANDER VVEDENSKY. Edited and translated by George Gibian. These zany and wildly imaginative pieces, written in Soviet Russia forty years ago, are as vital (and disturbing) as the best of today's absurdist literature. Daniil Kharms and Alexander Vvedensky, two members of the avant-garde literary group called Oberiu, wrote in Leningrad during the late 1920's and the 1930's with no hope of publication. Mr. Gibian includes twenty-eight mini-stories, a long story, two plays, two children's stories, and "The Oberiu Manifesto," a statement of the group's goals and principles. $6.50

Cornell University Press ITHACA and LONDON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Charles Boer, translator
THE HOMERIC HYMNS
$7.50
"a *very* extraordinary achievement."
—William Arrowsmith

John Matthias, editor
23 MODERN BRITISH POETS
$10.00
"We know of no comparable group collection." —The Kirkus Reviews

Raymond Federman
DOUBLE OR NOTHING
$6.00
"among the fictional masterpieces of our age." —Richard Kostelanetz

Edwin Honig, translator
SELECTED POEMS BY FERNANDO PESSOA
introduction by Octavio Paz
$8.00
Portugal's greatest modern poet.
Bi-lingual edition.
First English translation.

Michael Anania, editor
NEW POETRY ANTHOLOGY II
$6.50
Introduces 8 new young poets:
Igor Webb, Linda Pasten,
John McMannon, Barry Wallenstein,
Donald Sheehan, John Matthias,
William Hunt, Michael Patrick
O'Connor

Lucien Stryk & Takashi Ikemoto, translators
AFTERIMAGES: Zen Poems of Shinkichi Takahashi
$5.00
The most important Japanese Zen poet of our century.

Albert Cook
ENACTMENT: Greek Tragedy
$7.50
The whole of Greek tragic drama viewed in relation to geography, religion, politics, myths of ancient Athens.

THE SWALLOW PRESS INC.
1139 S. WABASH AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New

The Pound Era
Hugh Kenner

This is an X-ray moving picture of the age of Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Lewis and their contemporaries—an age that was preoccupied with persistent patterns manifested in ceaseless change. The narrative centers on Pound, who best characterizes the anti-specialists whose art conferred on "tradition" and "permanence" a viable 20th century meaning. 608 pages 60 photographs and drawings $15.00

American Folk Legend
A Symposium
Edited by **Wayland D. Hand**

Fourteen well-known American and Canadian folklorists discuss here the general concepts of folk legend ranging from its definition to approaches useful in the study of legend as a genre. Several essays discuss the part legend has played in history and literature, and point out the contrasts between American and European legends.
224 pages $7.50

The Bamboo Grove
An Introduction to Sijo Verse
Translated, annotated and with an Introduction
by **Richard Rutt**

This volume, sponsored by the Asian Literature Program of the Asia Society, New York, provides a representative collection of Korean sijo verse, translated in a way that preserves many of the qualities of the originals. Not content with the usual analysis of the metrical form of sijo verse, the author goes beyond to examine sound patterns and to demonstrate the versatility of the genre. 184 pages $7.50

Beyond Punjab
A Sequel to *Punjabi Century*
Prakash Tandon

Mr. Tandon offers here a chronicle of changing India—new landscapes, social procedures, and public values. The account spans the final decade of British rule, the Independence regime, and post-Independence life.

"Mr. Tandon's book should be required reading for every student of modern Indian history and culture."—Stanley Wolpert 250 pages $7.00

War Comes to Long An
Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province
Jeffrey Race

"This book presents extremely significant research on revolutionary and counterrevolutionary developments in Vietnam over the past sixteen years."—David Marr

"Surely the best study written by an American on the nature, problems, and consequences of the Vietnam war."—Chalmers Johnson
350 pages illustrations $10.00

from California

University of California Press • Berkeley 94720

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE

American Scholar

A QUARTERLY FOR THE INDEPENDENT THINKER

PUBLISHED FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION BY PHI BETA KAPPA

In the right state the scholar is *Man Thinking*
—EMERSON

EDITORIAL BOARD

RENATA ADLER
HANNAH ARENDT
JACQUES BARZUN
DANIEL BELL
KENNETH B. CLARK
ROBERT COLES
RICHARD ELLMANN

PETER GAY
WILLIAM JOVANOVICH
ROBERT MOTHERWELL
DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN
HENRY A. MURRAY
SAUNDERS REDDING
WILLIAM M. ROTH
WILLIAM STYRON

HIRAM HAYDN, *Editor*
ROSEMARY PARK, *Consulting Editor*
HARLOW SHAPLEY, *Consulting Editor*
RENÉ DUBOS, *Contributing Editor*
MARY MOORE MOLONY, *Managing Editor*
CAROL B. BRANN VIOLA W. SHEEHAN

DOROTHY KERR, *Director of Circulation and Promotion*
CARLEY STRAUGHAN PAMELA L. GRAY SARA PIDGEON

Advertising Representative: KERR & ASSOCIATES, 1211 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 520, Washington, D. C. 20036. Telephone: 202-296-1478.

Published quarterly since 1932 by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. Printed by The William Byrd Press, Inc., 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, Virginia 23205. Second-class postage paid at Richmond, Virginia. Copyright © 1971 by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa.

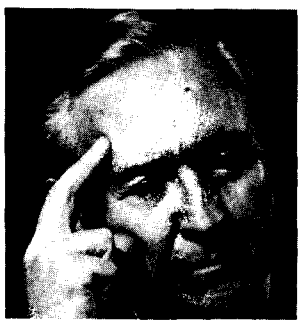
Send all change of address notices, undeliverable copies, subscription orders and other mail to *Editorial and Circulation Offices:* 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009.

Subscription Rates: $1.75 a copy, $5.00 one year, $9.00 two years, $11.00 three years, foreign and Canadian $.50 a year additional for postage.

Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage. No responsibility is assumed for their loss or injury, or for the views expressed in articles published.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Masters of Prose



JACQUES BARZUN
On Writing, Editing, and Publishing
Essays Explicative and Hortatory
With a Foreword by Morris Philipson

In this collection of essays, Jacques Barzun gives his ideas of what good writing is and how it can be achieved. Generous in sharing his own experience, exposing the chronic absurdities of both writers and publishers with wit and common sense, crushing jargon and pretentious expression with the hand of an expert, Mr. Barzun dissects the problems a writer must face. Past every pitfall and stumbling block, Mr. Barzun suggests an avenue of progress.

"Deftly written, rapidly readable, full of charm and wit. . . . Must reading for anyone who values clear and direct communication; even more for anyone who doesn't.—**Publishers' Weekly**

1971 *144 pages* *Paper P430 $1.35*

H. L. MENCKEN
Iconoclast from Baltimore
By Douglas C. Stenerson, Roosevelt University

Henry Louis Mencken was not a conventional man; he deserves something more than a conventional biography. Douglas Stenerson has fashioned a study worthy of its subject: incisive; witty, scholarly, engrossing—an intensive analysis of Mencken's temperament, his famed "prejudices," and his career in journalism.

Mr. Stenerson's "genetic" approach to the evolution of Mencken's talents as artist and iconoclast traces the genesis and development of his typical ideas and of the "coruscating and forceful style" which became his trademark.

The author views Mencken as "perhaps the most determined, persistent, and stylistically resourceful figure among the critics who kept alive the spirit of moral and aesthetic revolt of the nineties and handed it on to the young writers and intellectuals who helped spark the roughly parallel movement of the 1920s."

1971 *xvi, 276 pages* *Cloth $7.95*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5801 South Ellis Avenue *Chicago 60637*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Volume 41 *Winter, 1971-72* Number 1

CONTENTS

The Despairing Optimist	*René Dubos*	16
Hannibal for President	*Gerald W. Johnson*	29
A Tumult of Talk	*William Jovanovich*	40
The First Altar, *Poem*	*Paul Smyth*	50
The One Right Way to Write and Think?	*Benjamin DeMott*	53
A Common Enough Story, *Poem*	*Edward Weismiller*	63
Venetian Notes: Experiencing the City	*David Handlin*	65
Evaluating College Professors by "Scientific" Methods	*Evelyn Kossoff*	79
Fresh Air, *Poem*	*Daniel J. Langton*	94
On Trying to Understand Scientific Genius	*Gerald Holton*	95
Magritte: The Song of the Glass Keys and The Cape of Storms, *Poem*	*Lawrence Raab*	111
Art and Letters Literary Criticism and Literary Radicals	*Irving Howe*	113
Two Cold Rivers, *Poem*	*William Stafford*	120
Reappraisals The Alger Hiss Case Revisited	*Allen Weinstein*	121
A Place to Live In, *Poem*	*John Hay*	133
Sightings Love Stories	*Charles Thomas Samuels*	134
Letter from Europe	*Anthony Burgess*	139
The Revolving Bookstand Signs of the Times	*Geoffrey H. Hartman*	146
Reviews by *Alfred Werner, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Richard W. Noland* and *Lewis M. Dabney*		158
The Reader Replies		174

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Papers of

Jefferson Davis

Volume I

1808-1840

Edited by HASKELL M. MONROE, JR. *and* JAMES T. MCINTOSH
Introduction by Bruce Catton

A memorable American, central actor in one of the Republic's greatest stories, an indomitable character who could be broken but who could not be bent.—Bruce Catton

A full, carefully annotated edition which will make it possible for scholars to reassess the man who served as President of the Confederacy. This first volume of a projected multi-volume work covers Davis' youth, his years at West Point, his first military assignments, and his tragic first marriage. Includes a detailed genealogy of the Davis family. *688 pages, $15.00*

Supported by The William Stamps Farish Fund. Sponsored by William Marsh Rice University and The Jefferson Davis Association.

The Diary of Edmund Ruffin

Volume I, Toward Independence:
October, 1856–April, 1861

Edited by WILLIAM KAUFFMAN SCARBOROUGH. *Foreword by Avery Craven.* "Ruffin kept a diary of unusual quality. It provides a valuable insight into the psychology of an unusual man in an unusual situation. Perhaps it sheds some light on the psychology of a whole people on their course to revolution."—*Avery Craven.* Through the eyes of this outspoken secessionist, the reader views the crucial chain of events which drove the nation toward disunion and civil war. *704 pages, $20.00*

Selected Letters of Cotton Mather

Compiled with commentary by KENNETH SILVERMAN. An intimate history of Colonial America as recorded by one of its most active and observant men. The more than three hundred letters in this volume not only present a vast amount of information on the major events of the period but also reveal much about the personality of Mather. *472 pages, $15.00*

The Publishers of Southern History

Louisiana State University Press
Baton Rouge 70803

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

New and forthcoming titles in the expanded series of paperbound books for classroom use and independent study. Begun as *Scribners Humanities Library*, the series will now include titles from a wide variety of academic disciplines.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

John E. Rodes, *Occidental College*

A comprehensive study of the Western world beginning at 5000 B.C. and ending with a projection towards the emergence of the twenty-first century.

"The 'instant' age, whether or not chronologically under 30, opts for the quick decision, the existential choice. Those obsessed with the NOW imperative can find a corrective in this book which is a panoramic view of man's attempt to conquer nature, to subdue others, as well as his trial-error performance in the conquest of himself." *The Boston Globe*

"An interesting digest of a vast stretch of history, the volume is particularly helpful since it lists individual bibliographies at the end of each chapter in addition to a collection of source materials (all available in paperback editions) at the end of the book. 48 pages of relevant color maps." *The Montreal Star*

1970. 640 pp. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $10.00

THE WORLD OF ANCIENT TIMES

Carl Roebuck, *Northwestern University*

A balanced narrative in a chronological design but with an emphasis on social and political institutions.

"Some four thousand years of human history from the Stone Age to the fall of Rome are traversed in this exceptionally readable work."
Saturday Review Syndicate

"This is the best textbook in a single volume that I know."
The Classical Journal

"A liberal use of facts and dates helps to make the presentation clear, authentic, and informative, yet the author manages to avoid being dull or pedantic. He reveals an unusual grasp of many specialized areas of knowledge."
Archaeology

1966. xxv. 758 pp. 180 illustrations. 20 maps. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $15.00

THE ANCIENT HISTORIANS

Michael Grant

A masterful reappraisal of the ancient writers of history and their relationship to modern historical methods and views.

"By a cunning weaving of anecdote, quotation, and judicious comment he stimulates one to turn to the authors themselves." *The Classical World*

1970. 520 pp. 16 p. illus. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $12.50

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

THE AGELESS CHINESE, A HISTORY

SECOND EDITION

Dun J. Li, *The William Patterson State College of New Jersey*

A fascinating chronicle of China from its beginnings to the present.

"This is in many respects a truly remarkable book. The author has succeeded in compressing into less than 600 pages much of what is significant in the history of China during the past four thousand years. His learning is enormous, his scholarship impeccable, and his treatment of his subject not only imaginative but also exceedingly readable."

*The Journal of Modern History**

"General ignorance of Chinese history, and therefore Chinese aspirations, has been a major source of weakness in Western, and particularly American, policymaking. Reading this fascinating and informative book is one painless way of helping repair the most serious gaps in any intelligent citizen's or official's knowledge." *The New York Times**

*From reviews of the first edition, 1965.

1971. 608 pp. 30 maps. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $10.00

JAPAN: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

Mikiso Hane, *Knox College*

From the very early years through the disastrous war and defeat and ending with an assessment of Japan's remarkable post-war recovery and what Professor Hane refers to as the present "Age of Uncertainty," this forthcoming book will surely assume a predominate position. A unique feature is the frequent inclusion of primary sources, translated by the author, many appearing in English for the first time. The author received his primary and secondary education in Japan. Following undergraduate and graduate work at Yale, he has spent considerable time in further study in both Japan and other Far Eastern countries.

1972. About 700 pp. Maps and Illustrations. Bibliography.
SUL. About $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed., About $12.00

USSR: A CONCISE HISTORY

SECOND EDITION

Basil Dmytryshyn, *Portland State University*

The information presented, thoroughly updated in the second edition, is based on primary sources, many of which are included in the appendix.

"Dmytryshyn writes cogently and dispassionately about the highly controversial and turbulent history of the Soviet Union during the past half century. . . . An admirable survey which fills a great need for a well-written textbook treating the history of Russia since 1917." *Western Humanities Review**

"He comes to this study with stereoscopic vision and a cold eye, disclosing a Russian political and historical terrain unfogged by bias and partisan passion." *Los Angeles Herald Examiner**

*From reviews of the first edition, 1965.

1971. 640 pp. Maps. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $10.00

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

FRANCE: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY

Ernest John Knapton, *Wheaton College, Massachusetts*

A major analytical work by one of the foremost scholars of French history.

"Professor Knapton has attempted a nearly impossible task, a comprehensive history of France in less than 700 pages. That he has succeeded so well is a tribute to his careful scholarship and impressive talents for organization. From the Roman occupation of Gaul in the second century B.C. through Roman decline, the influx of German tribes, Charlemagne and Napoleon to the era of Charles de Gaulle, he sketches the long struggle of the French toward a politically unified society which would balance conflicting claims of individual liberty with central governmental order. Because he writes with an occasional but always welcome dry wit, Professor Knapton may reach a segment of general readers beyond those in college situations for whom this book is best geared." *Publishers' Weekly*

1971. 616 pp. Paper. Maps and Illustrations.
SUL. $5.95. Cloth Trade Ed. $15.00

REVOLUTIONARY AND IMPERIAL FRANCE 1750-1815

Ernest John Knapton, *Wheaton College, Massachusetts*

A brief social, cultural, economic, and political history of France during the days of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

". . . an excellent introduction to a complex and much debated subject."
R. R. PALMER, *Yale University*

1972. 160 pp. Maps and Illus. Paper. SUL $2.45

LIFE AND LETTERS IN FRANCE

Austin Gill, *General Editor, University of Glasgow*

The primary aim of this new series is to provide the student with the background—historical, political, social, economic and cultural—which will enable him to profit as fully as possible from his study of European and specifically French history and literature.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

W. D. Howarth, *University of Bristol* "The effect of the book is cumulative. We leave it feeling that a good many gaps have been filled in and that we know more about the century than we did before." *The Times* (London) *Literary Supplement*

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Richard Fargher, *Oxford University* "The book contains twenty extracts from eighteenth-century writers chosen to lead on to the most diverse discussions of aspects of the period. Dr. Fargher has gone much farther than merely presenting us with a competent picture of eighteenth-century France. His book is a delight to read and should prove informative to novice and expert alike."
The Times (London) *Literary Supplement*

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A. W. Raitt, *Oxford University* ". . . a good deal of information which the student will find useful to have between the covers of a single book."
The Times (London) *Literary Supplement*

1971. Each volume about 250 pp. Paper. SUL. $4.95 each.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

ENGLAND: A SHORT HISTORY

Goldwin Smith, *Wayne State University*

A History of England for those who want less detail and yet an understanding and comprehensive treatment.

"In writing this history it has been necessary, of course, to stress the chronology, the important and changing trials and problems of Englishmen, the leading characters who played their parts upon the stage of this small island, men toughened on the fields of battle, in the courts of law, in the world of politics. It has not been possible to let the camera pause for long on the minor players in the long drama. In various ways, however, I have frequently reminded the reader that the lesser characters, with their fears, hopes, envy, greed, evil, and goodness, their little victories and disasters, were always there . . ." *from the Preface*

For those who wish to make use of the many splendid monographs available, a rich bibliography is provided at the end of the book. Of the third edition of Professor Smith's A HISTORY OF ENGLAND, *Library Journal* said, ". . . Britain has been depicted brilliantly for the American Reader."

1971. 549 pp. Maps and Tables. Paper.
SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $12.50

PATHS TO MODERN MUSIC

Laurence Davies

The social and civilizing functions of music surveyed through the lives and works of representative composers.

". . . a refreshing and panoramic book. As a critic he is level-headed and even-handed, pulling no punches when straight talk is called for."
Publishers Weekly

1972. 352 pp. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $10.00

TWENTIETH CENTURY VIEWS OF MUSIC HISTORY

William Hays, *Union Theological Seminary*

A collection of thirty-four explanatory and critical essays covering Western music from Gregorian chant to electronic music and rock. Works by internationally recognized musicologists such as Jack Westrup, Hugo Leichtentritt, Leo Schrade, Manfred Bukofzer, Egon Wellesz, Paul Henry Lange, and Milton Babbitt range from the specific ("What Electronic Music Is and How It Is Made") to the general ("The Age of Goethe and Beethoven" and "After Wagner: What is Art?"). Each selection has a lengthy introduction by the editor and is followed by a bibliography. General Introduction by Richard French.

1972. 500 pp. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $12.50

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

OUR TIMES

Volume I, THE TURN OF THE CENTURY (1890s-1903)
Volume II, AMERICA FINDING HERSELF (1904-1905)
Volume III, PRE-WAR AMERICA (1905-1908)

Mark Sullivan

A reissue in paperback of the classic survey of the progress of the United States from the "Nineties" through 1908.

". . . an achievement of high merit," has "probably done more to interest people in American history than anything written in our generation."

ALLEN NEVINS

". . . achieves a summary of American life that is packed with color and action . . . Read again 35 to 40 years later, *Our Times* reveals itself as a work of greater-than-ever value and interest." *Smithsonian*

April 1972. Each volume about 600 pp. 200 illus. SUL. $5.95 ea.
A trade cloth edition is now available, $17.50 ea.

THE UNITED STATES 1492-1877

Harold W. Bradley

A short, interpretive history that emphasizes the political, economic, cultural and social developments at work in the birth and growth of the nation. Professor Bradley also deals with the various hypotheses advanced to explain the different eras of American history, from those of the Puritan historians of seventeenth century New England to those of the consensus historians of the 1950s.

SUL. Paper $5.95
1972. 480 pp. Color Maps. Cloth Trade Ed. $12.50

DISRUPTED DECADES

The Civil War and Reconstruction Years

Robert H. Jones

A well-paced historical-political narrative of the civil war and reconstruction years in America. Professor Jones explores the path to war with all of the blunders and unsuccessful attempts at compromise; he looks at the divergent societies of North and South before and during the war; he details the military events of the 1860s, along with the naval operations and diplomatic actions; finally, after Appomattox, he analyzes the course of Reconstruction. The book is enhanced by a considerable amount of original research into the military, diplomatic, and constitutional aspects of the war.

SUL. Paper about $5.95
1972. About 640 pp. Maps and Illustrations. Cloth Trade Ed. about $15.00

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

SOCIOLOGY: SOCIAL SCIENCE AND SOCIAL CONCERN

Second Edition

Ritchie P. Lowry, *Boston College*
Robert P. Rankin, *Chico State College*

The events of the last three years that have brought about a greater emphasis on the humanistic approach to the study of sociology are reflected in the new subtitle to this revised edition of *Sociology: The Science of Society*. In addition to numerous textual changes that bring the work up to date, a new chapter "The Dynamics of Conflict" has been added. It deals with the crisis issues of today including such subjects as the function of conflict in human society, a reevaluation of the role of violence, war, and revolution, and the relationship of ecology and the struggle for power.

". . . students can comprehend and enjoy it without constant explanation from the instructor." *American Sociological Review*

March, 1972. About 700 pp. Paper. Charts & Photos. SUL. About $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. About $10.00

CROWDED WILDERNESS

The Indian in American History

Robert W. Venables

An intense portrayal of the Indian in America, his experiences, his treatment by white settlers, and his influence on American history. Professor Venables describes the Indians' impact on the patterns of white settlement and on international diplomacy and war during the colonial period; their effect on slavery and their role in the Enlightenment, the Great Awakening, the American Revolution, and the Civil War; their influence on the formation of American foreign policy and other aspects of American political and social thought.

SUL. Paper about $5.95
1972. About 400 pp. Maps and Photographs. Cloth Trade Ed. about $10.00

INDIANS AND WHITES

Struggle on the Colonial Frontier

Wilbur R. Jacobs

An interrelated collection of essays dealing with some of the major themes and episodes in Indian-white contacts during the colonial era. Professor Jacobs also analyzes the noble savage theme and draws a masterful comparison of the North American Indian, the Australian aborigine, and the New Guinean native. "The evidence shows that the Indians were unmercifully exploited. Much of what is included here documents that exploitation, an exploitation made possible by a transplanted European population that tolerated such excesses."

(from the Introduction)

SUL. Paper about $3.95
1972. About 300 pp. Cloth Trade Ed. about $8.95

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCRIBNERS
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MANKIND

Ninian Smart

An objective, scientific examination of the chief characteristics of all religions and a detailed description of the principal faiths found in world history.

"There are few facts or events relevant to mankind's religious experience that Mr. Smart has failed to mention. Mr. Smart's book is timely, and it will be valuable, not only for Christians and ex-Christians, but also for the non-Christian majority of mankind."

Arnold J. Toynbee, *New York Times Book Review*

"The result is a book pleasant to read and one that should be of real value to the broadest possible audience."

Journal of the American Academy of Religion

1969. 576 pp. Paper. Illustrations. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $10.00

ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

John M. Koller, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

Responding to the growing interest in Oriental thought, this book makes possible an understanding and appreciation of Oriental traditions and life.

"The direct, unpretentious way Koller leads his reader to grasp difficult concepts and visualize trends in the development of Oriental philosophy reveals his own clear comprehension of a vast subject." *Choice*

1970. 303 pp. Paper. SUL. $5.95
Cloth Trade Ed. $8.95

TYPES OF PHILOSOPHY

Third Edition

William Ernest Hocking and Richard Hocking

Nearing its fiftieth consecutive year on the Scribner list, this is the first time that Hocking's major study has been available in paperback. In the nature of the idea of the *Types,* its message is free from the demand for timeliness. Its aim is not to present the full variety of the philosophical cornucopia past or present, but to offer the major clues for beginning its enjoyment and for discovering one's own mind.

Third edition. 1958. 339 pp. Paper.
SUL. $5.95

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

Toward a Critical Sociology

By NORMAN BIRNBAUM, *Amherst College*. These essays express a generation's struggle to send onward a theory of society imbued with history. "[Birnbaum] bridges European and American scholarship with knowledgeable ease . . . Rarely has so much of importance been said so well."—ALVIN W. GOULDNER, Washington University. $10.95

The Jewish Writer in America

ASSIMILATION AND THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY
By ALLEN GUTTMANN, *Amherst College*. Professor Guttmann sets into full social context for the first time the "postwar flowering" of Jewish writers: the fiction of Bellow, Roth, Mailer, and Malamud; the essays of Kazin and Goodman; the poetry of Shapiro and Ginsberg. $7.95

Imagination and Power

A STUDY OF POETRY ON PUBLIC THEMES
By THOMAS R. EDWARDS, *Rutgers University*. "Edwards' book is learned, ingenious—and what is rarer—wise in its understanding both of the poets and relevant political contexts. . . . Altogether, an admirable performance."—REUBEN BROWER, Harvard University. $7.50

Blindness and Insight

ESSAYS IN THE RHETORIC OF CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM
By PAUL DE MAN, *Yale University*. These nine interpretive essays discuss recurrent patterns in contemporary European criticism, with emphasis on such writers as Ludwig Binswanger, Georg Lukács, Georges Poulet, and Jacques Derrida. $6.95

Harlem Renaissance

By NATHAN IRVIN HUGGINS, *Columbia University*. "The most intelligent, most sophisticated study of Negro writers in America that I have read."—KENNETH S. LYNN, The Johns Hopkins University. "A thoughtful and sensitive book."—OSCAR HANDLIN, Harvard University. *16 pages of halftones.* $8.95

Freud and the Americans *THE BEGINNINGS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1876-1917*

By NATHAN G. HALE, JR., *University of California, Riverside*. "It brings to light a great deal of hitherto unknown or little known material about the history of Psychoanalysis in America and about its background."—HENRI F. ELLENBERGER, M.D., University of Montreal. $15.00

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

Between Two Worlds

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF GRAHAM WALLAS

By MARTIN J. WIENER, *Rice University*. Graham Wallas, an early leader of the Fabian Society, helped found the sciences of political and social psychology. This study of Wallas and his ideas reveals how important the Edwardian era remains to the problems of today. $11.25

The Works of Sir John Suckling

THE PLAYS
Edited by L. A. BEAURLINE, *University of Virginia*
THE NON-DRAMATIC WORKS
Edited by THOMAS CLAYTON, *University of Minnesota*

Suckling's works are here presented in a canon, text, and order more authoritative than those of both the posthumous and unauthorized seventeenth-century collections and the more recent ones closely based on them. *(Oxford English Texts.)*
THE PLAYS: *frontispiece, 4 facsimiles,* $10.25
THE NON-DRAMATIC WORKS: *5 Plates, 7 facsimiles,* $17.75

The Life of Fulke Greville

FIRST LORD BROOKE

By RONALD A. REBHOLZ, *Stanford University*. Greville was a friend of Sir Philip Sidney, servant of Elizabeth I, councillor to James and Charles I, builder of a great estate, patron of poets and scholars, and writer of extraordinary intelligence. This biography traces his temperament as he changed from the optimism of a Protestant humanist to extreme Christian pessimism. *Frontispiece, fold-out chart.* $17.75

The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1970

By WILLIAM C. FLETCHER, *University of Kansas*. Members of the Russian Orthodox Church went underground during Collectivization and the Great Purges. The Church continued under adverse conditions, and today is the greatest influence in restraining the State's anti-religious designs. This study is based on recently available material from the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. $12.00

Government and Contractors

THE BRITISH TREASURY AND WAR SUPPLIES 1775–1783

By NORMAN BAKER, *State University of New York, Buffalo*. Professor Baker reassesses in detail the Treasury's administration of contracts for the supply of the British army during the American Revolution. Many hitherto neglected problems, political, economic, and technical, that confronted the Treasury and its contractors are given considerable attention. *(The Athlone Press.)* $13.00

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Despairing Optimist

RENÉ DUBOS

It was against a background depicting the Crusades that mathematicians, natural scientists, and philosophers discussed, once again, the possibility of providing physicochemical explanations for the phenomena of life and for human behavior. During June, 1971, the palace of Versailles was the scene of an international congress organized by the Institut de la Vie around the theme "From Theoretical Physics to Life." The scientific sessions were held in the Salle des Croisades, so called because its walls are decorated with seventeenth-century paintings illustrating the most notable events of the Crusades. Perhaps by intention, but more probably by accident, the speaker's platform was placed exactly under a painting of Pope Urban II extending his arms over the audience, as he launched the First Crusade from the Clermont cathedral. The intent of the congress was to show that all the phenomena of life are the expressions of physicochemical forces. But while listening to the speakers, I could not help noticing to my right and my left the pictures of Christians and Moslems slaughtering each other, and the scenes of ecstasy or despair as the Crusaders conquered or abandoned Jerusalem. The Crusades seemed far removed from the physicochemical explanations of behavior.

Participating in the congress were some fifty illustrious scientists, whose fields of specialization ranged from philosophy and mathematics, through physics and chemistry, to psychology and medicine. Among them were fifteen Nobel laureates! The scientific discussions were at first very peaceful. There was general agreement that all the constituents and processes found in living things, including man, obey the laws of inanimate matter. There was a consensus also that life had originated more than three billion years ago from organic matter produced out of simple chemicals by solar irradiation; no ill-feeling developed from the fact that there were almost as many hypotheses concerning the precise mechanism of life's beginnings as there were participants. The atmosphere became very tense, however, as soon as the discussions shifted from purely technical problems to the bearing of scientific knowledge on human behavior and on social action. When discussing the social aspects of science, the Nobel laureates and other illustrious scientists differed as much among themselves, in their attitudes and in their arguments, as would have groups of concierges and taxi drivers of Versailles.

The congress held in the Salle des Croisades showed that the technical problems posed by the relation of physics and chemistry to life are now within the possibility of scientific understanding. But the last phase of the program confirmed once more that it is much more difficult, if not impossible, to link the physicochemical aspects of life to the really important aspects of human behavior. As the medieval crowds shouted, "*Dieu li volt* (God wills it)" in response to the pope's plea that they liberate the Holy Land, the sound of their voices and their emotional outbursts were the expression of physical and hormonal forces that are now well understood. But the processes occurring in their bodies did not account for their motivation.

Living things behave in many ways as

✪ RENÉ DUBOS is a microbiologist whose column appears regularly in the SCHOLAR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

complex machines, and so do their societies. A single insect—whether ant, bee or termite—moves about its day's business in a mechanical way, much like a mindless automaton governed by external stimuli. In the words of Professor Lewis Thomas, of Yale University School of Medicine,

> A solitary ant, afield, cannot be considered to have much of anything on his mind; indeed, with only a few neurons strung together by fibers, he can't be imagined to have a mind at all, much less a thought; he is more like a ganglion on legs.

Another aspect of the insect's nature becomes apparent, however, when one observes the functioning community, an anthill for example. Thousands of ants crowded and working around their hill behave as a thinking, planning, calculating organism. So integrated is their behavior that the ant colony as a whole is more like a highly developed beast than a collection of individual insects. The same is true of other social insects. Termites, in particular, seem to generate a collective intelligence when their numbers reach a critical level in a colony.

There are countless other examples of separate creatures organizing to form complex social organisms. This occurs throughout the living world among animals, plants, and even microbes, as well as among social insects. For instance, the integrated behavior of schools of fish, flocks of birds, or bands of mammals obviously has a biological basis, and there is reason to believe that a similar kind of force is at work in the type of group behavior obscurely referred to as mob psychology in human populations.

Man is par excellence a social animal since he makes use of other human beings at every stage of his life. This dependence applies not only to his bodily, psychological and emotional needs but also to the cultural attributes that determine the characteristics of a society. The members of a given human group are linked in complex systems for the collection, storage, processing and retrieval of the immense variety of information that constitutes the collective property of the group. The linkage of persons into systems is probably coeval with mankind and is certainly more important than biological properties in determining the characteristics that differentiate man from animals. The explosive development of European science since the seventeenth century, for example, may have resulted in part from the use of a new system of communication among scientists, namely, the rapid publication of fragments of research findings in specialized scientific journals. As recently stated by Professor J. M. Ziman, of the University of Bristol,

> A typical scientific paper has never pretended to be more than another little piece in a larger jigsaw—not significant in itself but as an element in a *grander scheme.* This technique, of soliciting many modest contributions to the store of human knowledge, has been the secret of Western science since the seventeenth century, for it achieves a corporate, collective power that is far greater than any one individual can exert. [Italics mine]

The individual scientist may have only a dim view of the grand scheme to which his work relates; indeed he may even have no view of it at all, but his professional activities—limited in scope as they may be—contribute nevertheless to the collective building of the scientific enterprise. His individual paper, even in an obscure journal, is part of a highly effective mechanism of information building.

Any social structure is thus largely built out of immense numbers of contributions by the anonymous members of the community. In this regard, much human work resembles that of social insects building an anthill or a termite nest. Human communities, however, differ from animal communities in that their history is marked by countless upheavals of internal origin, which profoundly alter the course of their development. To the slow, involuntary sleepwalk of biological evolution, man has consciously added discontinuities through revolutionary changes brought about by the sudden introduction or rejection of technologies and ways of life.

The domestication of plants and animals, the control of irrigation water in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the river valleys of the Near and Far East, the development of weaving and pottery, the use of metals, the invention of writing and all the other marvelous developments of Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures certainly involved numerous progressive changes over many generations. Taken together, these achievements nevertheless deserve to be called a revolution when one considers how, despite the sparsity of populations and the difficulty of communication, they transformed the hunter-gatherer way of life into the complexities and splendors of prehistoric civilizations.

Throughout the historical period, new technical procedures and art forms have spread rapidly, as did, for example, Gothic architecture and sculpture; thus the famous smile of the Rheims angel was reproduced in many cathedrals of Northern Europe within a very few decades. The use of steam and industrial processes spread like wildfire over the Western world, transforming in an explosive manner industry, means of transportation, and ways of life. England had ninety-seven miles of railway track in 1830, 1,497 miles in 1840, and 4,800 additional miles were laid in the year 1845! In a single decade, the stagecoaches had disappeared from England and along with them a whole variety of trades.

The sudden transformations of life in our times are picturesquely epitomized by Lord Ritchie-Calder's experiences during his many trips all over the world:

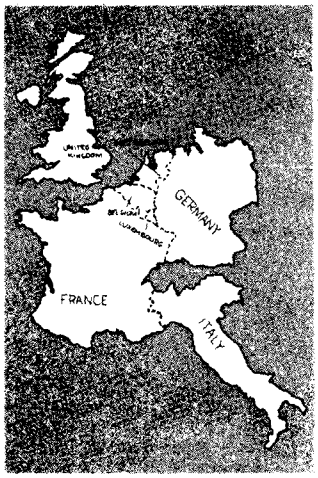
> In the Arctic, I "mushed" with the Eskimos who had Geiger counters on their dogsleds to seek uranium, and battery radio receivers to pick up the quotations of the Montreal metal market to see whether it was worth looking for uranium. In Nepal, on the slopes of the Himalayas, I listened with the Sherpas to radio accounts of Nautilus, the atomic submarine, going under the ice of the North Pole. In the High Andes of South America the disinherited heirs of the Incas were listening to the astronauts gossiping on the doorstep of space. During the worst days in the Congo, in the heart of darkness as Conrad called it, I watched the news bulletins from Cairo radio being picked up on radio receivers and the messages were being tapped out on the talking drums to be relayed through the swamp forest.

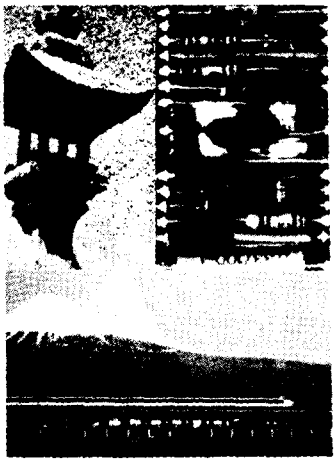
Man's ability to transform his life by social evolution and especially by social revolutions thus stands in sharp contrast to the conservatism of the social insects, which can change their ways only through the extremely slow processes of biological evolution. The difference with other animal communities, however, is not so clear-cut. Recently the crows in Boston discovered the ease of riding on top of trolley buses. In London, birds developed the knack of removing the covers from milk bottles left on doorsteps, so as to get at the cream. Colonies of primates have been known to acquire rapidly new social habits, such as washing potatoes in sea water before eating them, simply by imitating one of their members. And there are many well-documented examples of animals in the wild learning to function better in their environments by improving their skills in using local resources or otherwise changing their ways of life. The most that can be said, therefore, is that man can learn much more and much faster than any other living thing, and can communicate his newly acquired skills so effectively that they rapidly spread to the rest of mankind. Even though his superiority over animals in this regard is relative rather than absolute, it is obviously considerable and accounts in part for the rapidity of his social evolution.

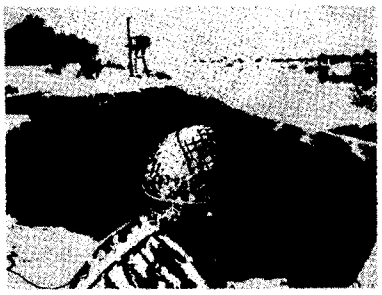
Man's ability to bring about social changes, however, does not depend only on the rapidity with which he can learn new skills and transmit them to his communities. Unlike animals, he can and often does reject consciously techniques or habits that he had acquired and social attitudes to which he had been conditioned. In fact, his proneness to alter or even abandon certain ways of life greatly accelerates or makes possible certain revolutionary changes and thereby sets him completely apart from the rest of the animal kingdom.

Taoism, Buddhism and Christianity are known today as specific doctrines defining the place of man in the order of things and his relation to other men. But the influence of Lao-tzu, Buddha and Jesus began with the rejection of certain social and religious orthodoxies of their times rather than with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED







What will it mean?

From the uncertainties of international relations with mainland China to the continuing crises of the Middle East, one of the best sources of information and views from the countries concerned is their press. The newspapers of a nation may reflect official or unofficial views of that nation, but they are views held by people influential in that nation's decision-making processes. The understanding of these views can be approached through these publications on microfilm from Microfilming Corporation of America:

ARGENTINA
La Prensa

AUSTRIA
Die Presse

BELGIUM
Het Laatste Nieuws

CANADA
Ottawa Journal
Winnipeg Free Press

CHINA
Jen-min Jih-pao
Peking Review

ENGLAND
Daily Telegraph & Morning Post
Sunday Telegraph

FRANCE
International Herald Tribune
Le Monde

GREECE
Athens News

INDIA
The Hindu (Madras)
The Statesman (Calcutta & Delhi)

ISRAEL
Ha'aretz
Maariv

JAPAN
Asahi Shimbun

LEBANON
Beirut Daily Star

MEXICO
Excelsior
Novedades

NETHERLANDS
De Volkskrant (Amsterdam)
NRC Handelsblad (Rotterdam)

PERU
El Comercio

SPAIN
La Vanguardia

TAIWAN
Central Daily News

VENEZUELA
El Nacional

YUGOSLAVIA
Borba
Politika

ZAMBIA
Times of Zambia

To learn more about these publications on microfilm, and others around the world, ask for *Other Views*, which describes the major foreign publications available on microfilm from Microfilming Corporation of America.

Subscription prices and backfile information on all of these publications on microfilm are available from MCA.

Microfilming Corporation of America

21 Harristown Road, Glen Rock, New Jersey 07452 • 201 - 447-3000

A New York Times Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the presentation of a systematic body of thought. Rejection of an objectionable state of affairs as much as allegiance to a new faith has indeed commonly been the trumpet call of social revolutions—whether they have been initiated by religious reformers such as Martin Luther, by social reformers such as Karl Marx, or by nameless soapbox orators.

The origin of some of the most spectacular and far-reaching movements of human history can be traced to a particular person, or more precisely to a view of the world seen by that person. The uniqueness of the initial visionary concept accounts in part for the fact that natural sciences have contributed so little of importance to the prediction or explanation of great historical events. The scientific method is most successful when dealing with phenomena that can be repeated and manipulated by experimentation.

Islam was born unpredictably in the mind of Mohammed, who was a middle-aged merchant of Mecca in Arabia Deserta early in the seventh century. The group of Arabs to which he belonged was then a small tribe, extremely poor, largely illiterate, and almost entirely isolated from the rest of the world. Yet, Mohammed and his immediate followers converted these destitute Arabs into a powerful fighting force that created in little more than a century an immense empire, prosperous, artistically refined, and intellectually sophisticated. The Arab Empire eventually disintegrated but the spiritual legacy it derived originally from Mohammed remains one of the great forces of the modern world.

In just as mysterious a manner, the idea of the First Crusade was apparently born in the mind of Peter the Hermit, a monk whose concern for the fate of the Holy Land was so obsessive that he might in other times have been sent to an insane asylum. But, by conveying his passion to anyone who would listen to him, Peter the Hermit was influential in starting the long series of Crusades during which the uncouth European barons learned from the Arabs the refinements of civilization and furthermore built all over the Near East the extraordinary structures we still admire.

The wills of Mohammed and Peter the Hermit thus set in motion immense social forces, the impact of which extended for centuries over the whole world. And so it is for all the great movements of human history. In his monograph, *Three Lincoln Masterpieces,* the American lawyer Benjamin Barondess pointed out that America would have become a very different kind of country if Abraham Lincoln had not decided to stand against William H. Seward as nominee for the Republican Party, and had not been elected president just before the Civil War. In Barondess' words, "There is no such thing as History. There is only His Story. An act is without significance unless we know the actor." But the real problem is to determine what first motivates the actor to act.

We know a great deal concerning the physicochemical phenomena that make life possible, and we can formulate reasonable hypotheses concerning their origin and evolution. We can imagine, even though we do not completely understand, how each particular living thing is shaped by genetic constitution, experiences and environment. But this kind of knowledge does not help to pinpoint the particular events in the mind of Mohammed, Peter the Hermit or Lincoln that made them take a stand at a critical time and thus trigger social movements that changed the course of human history. Free will may not be compatible with scientific determinism—at least as we understand it today—but it is certainly the strongest and most interesting force in human life. It constitutes what William James called the zone of insecurity in which all the dramatic interest lies; the physicochemical forces provide only the props and stage machinery.

Great leaders accelerate historical changes and may even impose on them a pattern of their own choice. But many of the social and cultural revolutions of the past seem to have occurred spontaneously, as if circumstances had made the people concerned de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON LITERATURE

THE SCHLEMIEL AS MODERN HERO
Ruth R. Wisse

With sensitivity and authority, the author traces the development of the schlemiel in Jewish literature from the medieval shetl bumpkin to the works of present-day writers such as Roth and Bellow.

"A wonderfully intriguing study by a very gifted new writer. . . . Miss Wisse writes with insight, irony and grace. . . . The book is one of the year's unhearlded pleasures."—*Publishers' Weekly*

1971 152 pages Cloth $5.45

MODERN FRENCH CRITICISM
From Proust and Valéry to Structuralism
Edited by John K. Simon

This collection of essays explores and reviews the work of the major French critics of the twentieth century who have changed the nature of criticism, transforming it from an auxiliary discipline to a "consciousness of consciousness" and a "literature about literature." René Wellek, Michel Beaujour, and Paul de Man are a few of the distinguished contributors.

1971 424 pages Cloth $12.50

THE FICTION OF NATHANAEL WEST
No Redeemer, No Promised Land
Randall Reid

"*The Fiction of Nathanael West* truly illuminates not only West's sources but his ideas and intentions. . . . The book must be read by anyone seriously interested in West."—James F. Light, *American Literature*

1968 x, 174 pages Cloth $4.50 Paper $2.25

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES OF LITERARY HISTORY
R. S. Crane
With a Foreword by Sheldon Sacks

Originally published in Crane's influential two volume work, *The Idea of the Humanities*, this essay was singled out for special comment: "Should be required reading for all graduate students of literature and their teachers. Although Crane's arguments are complex, his analysis of causal relationships in literary study is lucid."—Lee T. Lemon, *Prairie Schooner*

1971 128 pages Paper $1.75

The University of Chicago Press
5801 South Ellis Avenue Chicago 60637

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

velop a collective will capable of overcoming existing conditions.

Social structures, even though defective and weak, commonly remain stable for long periods of time because people develop a superficial tolerance of even the most objectionable prejudices and environments. Thus, for a thousand years, the humble people of Europe accepted the views that nobility was entitled to rule because it had been endowed by God with bluer blood, and that the bourgeoisie owed its wealth to superior talents. For three centuries, the black people in America appeared to tolerate the idea that their white masters really belonged to a higher race. Today, most people in industrial societies seem to have become convinced that environmental pollution, social regimentation, and other forms of social degradation cannot be avoided because they are the price of progress. But tolerance of an undesirable state of affairs rarely implies true adaptation. It corresponds rather to a passive acceptance, a form of resignation, that almost inevitably leads to withdrawal from the system and then to its outright rejection. This negative phase, in turn, is commonly followed by a search for new experiences and for other ways of life.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the dreariness of scholastic hairsplitting and disputatious verbosity generated a reaction that expressed itself through Boccaccio (1313-1375), Chaucer (1340-1400), Villon (1431-1463?), Rabelais (1494-1553), thus leading to the exuberant creativeness of the High Renaissance. During the mid-nineteenth century, a group of bold and gifted young men and women became bored with the stodgy comfort and rigid conventions of bourgeois life and sought for new experiences in the *vie de Bohème.* Only a very small percentage of the population adopted the Bohemian life-style, but this was enough to reestablish in the Western world a more direct way of seeing nature, and saner human relationships. By cleansing their world of its dusty social and visual accretions, the Bohemians launched the phenomenal creativity of European cultures during the past century. We owe a great deal to the new modes of expression in music, poetry, painting and other artistic forms that emerged from the Bohemian episode.

A movement similar in spirit to this episode, but on a much larger scale, is now directed against the banalities of mass-produced artifacts and values resulting from economic affluence. Like their nineteen-century Bohemian predecessors, modern youth is trying to escape from the artificialities of regimented life and from the degraded environments created by industrial civilization.

Until the 1940s, the damage done to life by the Industrial State and its megamachines was accepted passively. The social protest first began with the dejected escapism that gave such a drab complexion to Beatnik life. But this was soon followed by the frantic search for new, positive experiences and modes of expression in the various forms of counterculture. The practice of ancient handicrafts and of unconventional human relationships, bold experiments in the organization of intentional communities, shared experiences in tribal life; new designs and bright colors in clothing, gay sounds as from the tinkling of bells, interesting odors from incense and flowers, rites organized around the real or imagined forces and cycles of the cosmos—all these manifestations of the countercultures are attempts, trivial and clumsy as they often are, to recapture ancient and lasting values that industrial civilization is in the process of destroying.

There are indeed values that have been woven into the biological and social fabric of human life for several millennia and that are still as essential as ever to well-being and happiness. Their preservation does not require a return to cave life, but it demands the kind of social and technological reforms that will give man the opportunity to search for the fundamental satisfactions found only in nature, in human relationships, and in self-discovery. Henry Adams mourned the replacement of the cult of the Virgin by the cult of the Dynamo. In a more earthy and probably healthier way, the countercultures take up

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the plea for a world in which the flesh and the spirit are untrampled by the machine.

The present youth revolt against industrial civilization is amateurish and for this reason seems bound to fail. And yet, many times in the past movements based almost exclusively on emotion and apparently devoid of power have proved capable of upsetting the best-entrenched political and social systems. During the reign of Augustus, the Roman Empire was the largest, wealthiest and most powerful political structure in the world. At that time also, the Synagogue ruled supreme in religious and social matters over the Jewish people in Palestine. The values enshrined in the Empire and in the Synagogue must have then appeared stable enough to last an eternity. Yet Jesus was born during this period of apparent stability, more than ten years before Augustus' death, and his teachings soon began to disturb the established order of things. Who could have imagined at the height of the Pax Romana that the Empire would collapse under the blows of the Barbarians and that the Barbarians themselves would so rapidly submit to the Cross?

At first, the lowly Christians were less numerous and less well organized than are today the members of the countercultures. Yet they proved more influential than the Roman Empire, than the Synagogue orthodoxy, and than the vigorous tribes from the European forests and the Asiatic steppes, in determining the future of Western civilization.

In our times, we have seen how passive resistance, guerilla warfare, and sabotage—the weapons of the poor and the weak—succeeded in rapidly bringing down the mighty colonial empires of the Western nations. Social revolutions and colonial wars have demonstrated time and time again that technological and political power can be overcome by the determination of men. The crusade against the degradation of life and nature is facing great handicaps, but it can succeed if enough bold spirits really believe that the time has come to convert our industrial society into a humane civilization.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDWARD O. WILSON

THE INSECT SOCIETIES

This first comprehensive study of social insects since the 1930's includes more than 250 illustrations and covers all aspects of classification, evolution, anatomy, physiology, and behavior of the social insects—ants, social wasps and bees, and termites. The author reinterprets the knowledge of social insects using concepts of modern biology. *Belknap.* $20.00

REUBEN A. BROWER, *editor*

TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE IN RETROSPECT HARVARD ENGLISH STUDIES 2

The sixteen essays in this second volume of Harvard English Studies explore and revaluate the work of twentieth-century writers and critics from Joyce and James to Iris Murdoch and Mailer, from Yeats and Eliot to critics and poets of the present generation. Among the contributors are Frank Kermode, F. R. Leavis, Josephine Miles, and Christopher Ricks. Cloth $12.50, Paper $3.45

JACQUES HERBRAND

WARREN D. GOLDFARB, *editor*

LOGICAL WRITINGS

Before his untimely death at the age of twenty-three, Jacques Herbrand had made enduring contributions to modern logic; his principal concern was to develop a unified approach to all questions of proof theory. This volume gathers together all of Herbrand's papers in mathematical logic written between 1929 and 1931, accompanied by extensive explanatory material. With two exceptions the papers are published here for the first time in English. $18.75

EVERETT MENDELSOHN, JUDITH P. SWAZEY, and IRENE TAVISS, *editors*

HUMAN ASPECTS OF BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION

Samuel Bessman, Mark Field, John Knowles, Louis Lasagna, Edmund Pellegrino, Victor Sidel

Here is an examination of the social and ethical implications of new biomedical technologies—from behavior control to organ transplants. This book explores the present state of our system of medical care, including the disappearance of the general practitioner, medical care for the poor, and the ethics of human experimentation. *Harvard Studies in Technology and Society.* $9.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LEONARDO DA VINCI

The Royal Palace at Romorantin

Through a wealth of illustrations and all of Leonardo's manuscript references to the project, this volume brings to life the image of Leonardo's last dream—the royal residence at Romorantin which was abandoned in 1519, the year of his death. *Belknap.* $20.00

CARLO PEDRETTI

THE FATAL HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE CEYLON

Transition to Dutch Rule

Mr. Winius, the first historian in 300 years to tell the story of the Dutch take-over of Ceylon from the viewpoint of the vanquished Portuguese, theorizes that, during the wars of the Restoration period, Portugal shifted focus from Asia to South America, and, convinced that Brazil was more valuable than Ceylon, all but deliberately let Ceylon go. $10.00

GEORGE DAVISON WINIUS

AN ARGUMENT OF IMAGES

The Poetry of Alexander Pope

Mrs. Spacks explores the ways in which Pope's imagery expresses aesthetic control while it also embodies and enforces ideas of ethical power and limitation. She relates her discussion of Pope's writings to the broader theme of the sources and function of imagery and the ways in which it operates. $10.00

PATRICIA MEYER SPACKS

THE MYTHS OF CABINET GOVERNMENT

Secretary of State for Social Services and member of the Labour Cabinet when he delivered these lectures, Mr. Crossman reveals the reality of government in Britain: the British system has become Prime Ministerial Government. In his Introduction Mr. Crossman tests his thesis by applying it to Mr. Heath's first year as Prime Minister. *The Godkin Lectures, 1970.* $5.95

RICHARD H. S. CROSSMAN

In Canada / Saunders of Toronto, Ltd.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARVIN LAZERSON

ORIGINS OF THE URBAN SCHOOL

Public Education in Massachusetts, 1870-1915

As the United States emerged as an urban-industrial nation, American reformers thrust the responsibility for reshaping the urban environment upon the city school. Mr. Lazerson assesses the subsequent reforms implemented in ten Massachusetts school systems and relates them to their ultimate impact on today's education. *Joint Center for Urban Studies.* $10.00

MARTIN LINDAUER

COMMUNICATION AMONG SOCIAL BEES

Third printing, enlarged

For this printing of the brilliant study that was hailed by *American Scientist* as "a first-rate book," the author has written three appendices on recent developments in the field. They cover the significance of the bees' dance, the influence of the earth's magnetic field on dancing bees, and learning and memory in honeybees. *Harvard Books in Biology, 2.* $6.95

HENRY W. MENARD

SCIENCE

Growth and Change

"Science," writes the author, "has grown like a bean sprout . . . for 200 years. Now, like a mature bean plant, the growth is beginning to wane and the life of scientists may never be the same." Taking a keen look at patterns of growth of different sciences, Mr. Menard traces periods of dormancy, growth, and decline and analyzes their consequences. $10.00

JOHN RAWLS

A THEORY OF JUSTICE

This book presents the theory of justice that Rawls has developed over a period of years, from his 1958 essay "Justice as Fairness" to his recent "The Justification of Civil Disobedience." The principles of justice he sets forth are those that free and rational persons would accept in an initial position of complete equality. *Belknap.* $15.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MERCHANT PRINCE OF BOSTON

Colonel T. H. Perkins, 1764-1854

CARL SEABURG and STANLEY PATERSON

Thomas Handasyd Perkins was one of the most successful and eminent of the China Trade merchants at the time of Boston's commercial leadership. This biography depicts Perkins as a leading citizen and a merchant philanthropist who contributed to the city's cultural and civic development. *Harvard Studies in Business History, 26.* $16.00

POEM AND MUSIC IN THE GERMAN LIED FROM GLUCK TO HUGO WOLF

JACK M. STEIN

In this unique combination of literary exegesis and musical analysis, Mr. Stein has produced an engaging and balanced study of the lied's evolution in Germany between 1750 and 1900. He discusses the problems inherent in the lied as an art form, devoting separate chapters to the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Hugo Wolf. $10.00

GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF UNITED STATES IMPRINTS

G. THOMAS TANSELLE

This long-awaited guide to research, which lists the bulk of the material on American printing and publishing, is a practical manual for identifying, cataloguing, and recording printed matter. It covers imprint lists by region, genre, and author; copyright records, catalogues, and book-trade directories; general and specific studies of printers and publishers and checklists of secondary materials. *Belknap.* 2 volume set, $40.00

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK BIOGRAPHY

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO

The acknowledged master of ancient historiography here extends his research to a comparatively neglected area of his field. Combining historical analysis with literary criticism, Mr. Momigliano traces the growth of ancient biography from obscure beginnings in the fifth century to the first century B.C. and propounds his own theories of the origins of biography. $8.00

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MAN AND HIS CIRCUMSTANCES
Ortega as Educator

Robert McClintock

José Ortega y Gasset is one of the most wide-ranging, widely-published philosophers of this century; and he may prove to be one of the most influential. Throughout his life, he acted as an educator of the public, a "civic pedagogue," as he put it. Even in exile, this was the mission that he relentlessly pursued with a marvelous variety of means: as writer, journalist, teacher, statesman—one of the truly innovative thinkers of our time. In a book that is exposition, critique, and intellectual biography, Robert McClintock treats Ortega's life and work as an integral whole, placing him in his European and Western, not simply his Spanish, context. Ortega saw more clearly than most that modern man was "shipwrecked in the sea of life," but, refusing despair, he argued that the loss of dogmas and certainties must make men yet more aware that in the midst of crisis they must choose their landfalls. Writers on the left and the right have often taken Ortega's name and image to their own uses. Here readers will find a new view of Ortega, one that makes clear his own disdain for out-worn polarities of right or left. Man's dilemma, he insisted, is not comprehended in the formulas of doctrinaires, the party men whom he called "walking suicides." The philosopher at work, man thinking, must be the civic pedagogue, in this case one seeking a coherent European response, a supranational, universal solution to the discontents of post-industrial life. This book, as no other study has done, explores how we can learn from Ortega to promote the education of new publics, ones which will themselves create a humane posterity.

1971 649 pp. Cloth, $15.00

Studies in Culture & Communication
Martin S. Dworkin, General Editor

Teachers College Press
Teachers College, Columbia University
1234 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10027

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hannibal for President

GERALD W. JOHNSON

THE THUNDER of the captains and the shouting" attendant upon the collision of the government and the newspapers over publication of the so-called Pentagon Documents annoyed quietists extremely and no doubt is regrettable for that reason, but that it is regrettable for any other reason is widely open to doubt. True, it has compelled many normally torpid minds to think about certain fundamentals of our political structure, which is painful in the extreme, but not necessarily regrettable—for, in politics, painful thinking is often profitable thinking.

For one thing, the uproar has jerked a large, possibly a sufficient, number of Americans out of a kind of self-induced hypnosis in which we have reposed for generations—the superstition that the foundations on which we have based our political structure are immutable and immortal, unaffected by passing time and shifting circumstance. The effect on public debate is slight as yet, but for the first time in many years people who are not among the eccentrics that Theodore Roosevelt dubbed the "lunatic fringe," but thoughtful, serious observers, are raising the question of whether individualism, the basis of free enterprise, as well as of free speech and a free press, is still a tenable political philosophy in a world as shrunken and crowded as ours is today.

This suggests that what the Supreme Court decided in *United States* v. *New York Times* was a side issue, peripheral to a much larger and more important question. The suggestion is emphasized by the obvious agitation of the justices. When nine judges return ten judgments in one case, it is evidently no ordinary piece of litigation. The government sought to prevent the *Times* and other

✪ GERALD W. JOHNSON tells us that as journalist, essayist and biographer he has been guessing at the significance of American politics since the administration of Woodrow Wilson, and that occasionally he has been right. Liveright will publish Mr. Johnson's *The Imperial Republic* this spring.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

newspapers from printing certain records, whose authenticity was not in question, on the ground that publication would imperil the national security; but a majority of six found that the government had not presented convincing evidence that it would do so, and therefore decided in favor of the newspaper.

Yet in addition to the very brief decision of the whole court, each of the nine justices filed an opinion explaining his individual position. They varied widely but agreed in repudiating any idea that the Court was claiming authority to repeal any part of the Constitution of the United States, specifically, that part of the First Amendment decreeing that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging freedom of speech or of the press."

It is evident that the justices were nervous about the possible repercussions that their decision on a point of law might have on a nonjusticiable question, to wit, doubt of the viability of the doctrine of free speech and a free press under modern conditions. The Constitution in another place decrees that "all legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States," so it is plain that a law Congress cannot make cannot be made by the president, the Supreme Court, or any other governmental authority.

Presumably the justices had in mind, as well they might, the unhappy experience of Chief Justice Roger Taney when he added to a legally sound decision in the *Dred Scott* case certain *obiter dicta* that had a terrific impact on the nonjusticiable question of the toleration of slavery. Nine years later the Taney court was overruled, but in a fashion that nearly brought down the Union, instead of in the orderly fashion prescribed in the Fifth Article of the Constitution. The real significance of the nine individual opinions is that the Burger court is not going to risk a repetition of that disastrous experience.

Which implies that the case of *United States* v. *New York Times* has been finally adjudicated only regarding the procedural course followed by the government attorneys. They staked their case on an allegation that the publication in question would be prejudicial to the safety of the nation, but they did not prove it; therefore they lost. The multiplicity and variety of the individual opinions filed are, however, conclusive evidence that there is an-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other issue involved, to wit, the viability of the doctrine of freedom of speech and of the press under modern conditions.

Since the doctrine is embedded in the instrument from which the Supreme Court derives its power, it is beyond the jurisdiction of any court of law. But it does not follow that it is inviolate and immortal. There still lies an appeal from the Supreme Court to that intangible, but very real, entity called the court of public opinion, on whose bench you and I and every other qualified voter sit in judgment. "We, the people of the United States" did "ordain and establish this Constitution," and may at will exercise our sovereign power to alter or abolish it. The issue is squarely before us and, willy-nilly, we shall have to decide it. This is ample cause for perturbation of spirit, for if the question baffled men with the intellectual powers of the nine justices, the ordinary voter may rest assured that it will rack his brain to the limit of endurance.

The search for a scapegoat on whom to unload responsibility for our perplexity, although perhaps inevitable, will certainly be futile, and may be as pernicious as it is useless. Messrs. Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, successive occupants of the presidential office since the end of the Second World War, indubitably have had their faults, which at present are being exposed mercilessly, but none nor even all of them created the predicament in which we find ourselves. It is the work of historical trends over which they had no control, and the gravamen of their offending was lack of the very acute perception required to appraise correctly the significance of those trends. If that is criminal, it is a crime of which few Americans can find themselves not guilty.

Our misfortune was to be saddled with imperial responsibility at the moment when the main prop of historical imperialism had been shattered by the advance of technology, our own in the lead. That prop, for centuries, had been superior military power derived from superior weapons—counting discipline as a weapon, which it assuredly is. But when our technologists developed, and those of Russia, China, Britain and France promptly duplicated, the ultimate weapon, one capable of destroying any target, anywhere, instantly, superiority in weaponry vanished. Russia and the United States already have, and China is rapidly acquiring, weapons capable of destroying any nation against which they are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turned. For any one of them to fire on any of the others would invite the attacker's almost certain destruction. War as a support of imperialism is definitely out. If it is to survive, it must be by other means.

The simplistic answer accepted by millions of Americans is, if that is the case, let us by all means reject imperialism. This answer is simplistic because that choice is not open to us. Apart from military strength, we are still in possession of enormous economic power, backed by a highly advanced technology, a science that is at least respectably advanced, and a prestige that, although diminished, is still potent. Together, these constitute formidable power, and in a state of civilization power cannot be divorced from responsibility to preserve and advance civilization. As long as we hold on to the power, we cannot shake off the duty.

If, then, we are under duress to wield imperial power without reliance on the traditional resource of armed might, the time has come for a realistic reexamination of our political philosophy, specifically, our commitment to the doctrine of freedom of speech and of the press, to determine its applicability to the new conditions. But a question of the worth of the Constitution is nonjusticiable, which explains why the justices were so insistent that their *Times* decision has no bearing on the point.

The first step toward rational judgment of such a case is, naturally, examination of the reasons for inserting the prohibition in the first place. As it happens, one of the early presidents—the third, to be precise—supplied us with an explanation as adequate as it is succinct. His words are, "though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable." Implicit in this is an admission that majority rule can be unreasonable and therefore, in Jefferson's opinion, wrongful. Implied, also, is the assumption that a judgment, to be reasonable, must be based on known facts, and the best-intentioned man cannot be expected to judge reasonably if he is ignorant of the pertinent facts.

Up to this point the analysis leaves no room for argument. It is fantastic to assume that political judgments can be rightful if they are unreasonable, or that they can be reasonable unless they are based on known facts. But here enters the then untested hy-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pothesis on which Jefferson staked everything: he assumed that a majority, if apprised of all the pertinent facts in each case, will arrive at a reasonable judgment more than half the time.

This was vehemently denied by many of Jefferson's contemporaries including some whose general intelligence compared favorably with his own. In later years Jefferson installed in Monticello portrait busts of the two greatest men he had ever known personally; they were George Washington, who doubted, and Alexander Hamilton, who flatly repudiated, his theory of the political competence of the people. But the survival of the republic for more than a hundred and eighty years has verified the hypothesis under the conditions in which the experiment was conducted.

What has revived the question is the fact that conditions have changed radically since 1789, when the Constitution went into effect. The original document, indeed, paid very slight deference to the Jeffersonian theory. Not until the Bill of Rights was rammed into it was its elitist—the term then current was Federalist—tone reduced far enough to make possible the gradual conversion of the government into a democracy a generation later.

At the time and for many years following, the responsibility of the American people was confined to the advancement of what were, or seemed to be, their strictly national interests. Even the rape of Mexico—softened a bit by the payment to Mexico of damages in the same amount that Jefferson paid for the Louisiana territory—was primarily nationalistic. The diplomatic adjustments of the Maine and Oregon boundaries were clearly so, as was "Seward's folly," the term applied to the purchase of Alaska for six and one-third tenths of one percent of the price the oil companies have agreed to pay for a strip of its northern coast.

We did make occasional irruptions into old-style imperialism, notably in the Venezuelan boundary affair, the acquisition of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and our occupation of the Philippine Islands for forty-five years, but Theodore Roosevelt's acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone was primarily an iron-fisted response to attempted blackmail, secondarily, a service to our coastwise shipping, and only thirdly, a contribution to the sea-borne traffic of the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even our war with Spain, customarily described as our first truly imperialistic adventure, was in fact an effort—ineffectual, as recent events have proved—to abate an international nuisance, not because it was international, but because it was only ninety miles offshore and therefore a threat to our national interests. All of these, incidentally, provoked vigorous, if fruitless, domestic opposition.

Despite the exceptions, it is substantially accurate to say that the American experiment with democracy has thus far demonstrated its viability only as a nationalistic form of government. Our foreign policy has been based overtly, if not always covertly, on protection of our national interests. Imperial responsibilities were ignored because they did not exist in a degree demanding the careful and consistent attention of the majority of the electorate. Very seldom did they involve any clear and present danger to our form of government, so we found it practicable and convenient to leave them almost entirely to our accredited agents, the president and the secretary of state. Gradually intervention by the will of the majority came to be regarded as highly dubious and eventually as almost treasonable. Political isolationism was possible because geographical isolation did in fact exist.

But all that has changed in spite of our tardy recognition of the fact. When the contemporary successor of the old-fashioned artilleryman can stand in Montana and fire a shot that will destroy Moscow, and the Muscovite can return the compliment on Washington, isolation has become a vanished dream, and political isolationism, merely the incontestable power to commit suicide.

Every American with education enough to read the newspapers is acquainted with the fact that science and technology have made modern civilization a seamless web covering the whole surface of the globe; but while no seam offers a line of smooth division, it is rent in so many places that, like Emerson's theory of the world, it is "a thing of shreds and patches" that we, by reason of our political weight, are largely responsible for repairing. Hence the necessity of examining our implements.

This implication of the known fact is plain enough to our political philosophers, which accounts for the multiplying expressions of doubt of the extent to which individualism remains a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tenable philosophy in the modern world. One of its most logical sequents, free enterprise, has been steadily qualified all over the world, to the point of extinction in large areas, because its primary tenet,

> the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can,

is inconsistent with the fact that Homo sapiens is one of the social animals who values his society above the life of any of its individual members. What, then, of free speech and its concomitant, a free press? Their antisocial potential is obvious, for they communicate lies as readily as truth, and it is pleasanter to believe a suave lie than a harsh truth, hence a lie gains credence more easily than truth. Obviously, a majority stuffed with lies cannot be expected to judge issues reasonably; therefore, its prevailing will must be wrongful and eventually ruinous.

In 1787, and for a considerable length of time thereafter, this line of argument was followed by practically all non-American observers of political affairs, and by not a few in this country. Hamilton, for instance, for all his eloquence in the *Federalist,* privately gave the new form of government a life of twenty years at most. The new government, however, has already survived nearly ten times that long, conclusive evidence of a flaw in Hamilton's logic.

The flaw, evidently, is an underestimate of the capacity of an effectual majority of the people, when given all the pertinent facts, to discern between truth and fiction. It is imperfect. It may be argued plausibly that the historical record shows it to be barely sufficient—effective, to speak at a venture, about five times out of nine. But that has been enough. The proof is the undeniable fact that under this system the nation has not only survived but flourished prodigiously for more than a hundred and eighty years.

It was no accident. From 1796 on the people had a choice between Jefferson and Hamilton, and they followed Jefferson when by all elitist reasoning they were bound to follow Hamilton. He was vastly superior to Jefferson in all the attributes supposed to bedazzle and bewitch the common man. He was handsome,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brilliant, eloquent and audacious, as against an ugly, awkward, weak-voiced and utterly unheroic opponent. Hamilton was the leader with charm (in current argot, *charisma,* a semantic outrage, for the Greek word means the outward manifestation of an inward grace, and whatever it manifested in this case, it was certainly not inward grace). Nevertheless, Jefferson was the winner.*

Incontestably, the redesigned, rebuilt and reconditioned form of democracy produced in Philadelphia in 1787 has worked on the national scale—not, indeed, to the heart's desire, but well enough to permit the nation to survive and prosper. While this is no assurance that it will continue to work equally well under the new conditions, it certainly imposes upon the ordinary voter the duty of reexamining our democratic system lest in attempting to readjust it to bear new stresses and strains, we inadvertently cast aside some structural element essential to its endurance.

One thing that comes to light very promptly under realistic examination of our national origin is that the final, decisive word was not spoken in 1787 by the unparalleled aggregation of political genius in Philadelphia, but by the mass of the people in 1789, when the requisite ninth state ratified the document. Some modern historians, for instance, Samuel Eliot Morison in his recent *Oxford History of the American People,* think that the arguments of the polemists had less to do with it than blind faith in the word of such men as Washington and Franklin, who said that it was a good thing. But both of these men were frankly dubious, and in Virginia, the pivotal state, such glamorous figures as Patrick Henry, George Mason and, at first, Richard Henry Lee, were in open revolt. It is amazing that Madison, in the absence of Jefferson, still in France, managed to swing that indispensable state. One suspects that Hamilton was persuaded by his own arguments in the *Federalist,* which he wrote with great difficulty. In Massachusetts Samuel Adams, at first rebellious, had to be brought over, and John Hancock had a convenient attack of the gout that saved him from having to cast a vote, pro or con, in the ratifying convention.

No, the opposition was brilliant, determined and skillfully led.

*Incidentally, fanciers of the dramatic may see in this confrontation a preview of the later and more spectacular collision of The Little Giant and Honest Abe. It was The Little Giant who held Abe's hat on inauguration day.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The decision was thoroughly considered by men who had heard the arguments on both sides. The fact that it proved to be correct is strong evidence of the political competence of Americans at that time.

The catch in it is that these Americans had been subjected to more than twenty years of steady, and, for eleven of those years, very intensive education in the theory of government. Since 1765, when the continent finally became British, the name of John Locke was known perhaps to a larger percentage of the literate in America than in England, and that of Montesquieu—however barbarously mispronounced—was cited in political debates from Massachusetts to Georgia. The reason was simple: their rather narrow escape from transfer from an English-speaking Anglican overlordship to one French-speaking and Catholic, had given Americans of all classes a lively interest in theories of government that generated a strong dislike of hereditary nobility and any kind of state church. Then, after 1776, what had been an academic discussion turned into a practical problem of increasing urgency.

Everyone realized that the Articles of Confederation were a makeshift devised strictly for war purposes. It was taken for granted that after the return of peace they would have to be reconstructed, and the total abolition resolved on at Philadelphia came as no great shock to a public accustomed for eleven years to listen to almost daily debates on what must be done.

In short, when the question of ratification came before the court of public opinion the judges—then numbering perhaps half a million white male adults—had all the pertinent facts before them and therefore were in position to judge reasonably, which they did.

But to claim that the living generation, confronted with a similar problem, is equally well-informed would be reckless. Our academicians and our politicians—excluding the very large peanut contingent—are perhaps better informed than were the men of 1787 because the labors of historians, economists and philosophers in the past two centuries have supplied them with exact facts in far greater abundance than were available then.

The *cognoscenti,* however, are a small minority of the whole electorate, and to take it for granted that an effective—which is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not necessarily a numerical—majority of today's American voters are as well acquainted with the present state of political theory as were their ancestors is by no means justified. They are still heavily addicted to superstition. True, the once dominant delusion that every Communist is physically eight and mentally ten feet tall, seems to be fading, but the word "imperialism" provokes a recoil as automatic today as that provoked by "democracy" in 1787. Yet it stands to reason that no form of government that has lasted as long as this republic is totally devoid of merit, and it is not hard to identify in any of the great historical empires. Even imperial Spain preferred to Christianize rather than exterminate her Indian subjects, while Rome, Byzantium and Britain long conferred upon their conquests benefits worth more than the tribute they exacted —first of all, security from barbarian invasion, and internal tranquillity, their prosperity and, especially, advanced sciences, technics, arts and learning. As long as they were worth more than they cost, they retained a loyalty of their tributaries that guaranteed their own security. Not until they began to exact more than they returned, in tangibles as well as intangibles, did they crumble.

If the typical American gets this firmly fixed in his mind, he will realize that his plight is strikingly similar to that of his ancestors—that of adapting and rehabilitating a discredited political theory. The main prop supporting historical imperialism has been demolished by the nuclear weapon. But long before 1787 the theory of democracy as a viable form of government had been even more thoroughly exploded, so thoroughly that its very name was anathema to our own leaders.

The real miracle at Philadelphia was not the Constitution itself. Despite Gladstone's exuberant eulogy—"The most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man"—a far more wonderful thing was the mastery of statecraft shown by those resourceful and daring men who salvaged from an otherwise complete wreck its driving power, which they installed in a new and better-designed framework. It was masterly leadership, but at that it would have been ineffectual had there not been at hand a following so well informed of all the pertinent facts that it was capable of judging reasonably and therefore, as Jefferson would have it, rightfully.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To emulate that feat we must have both competent leadership and a following well informed of the pertinent facts of the situation. No soothsayer at this moment can say authoritatively that we have both, or either, hence the doubtfulness of the outcome. Nevertheless we are doomed to try, for imperial responsibility has been thrust upon us while the historical framework of imperialism, military might, lies shattered beyond repair. Yet the vital principle of empery was ever its net worth to civilization, and that principle is no more impaired by the ultimate weapon than is the atmospheric pressure that enables a plane to take off and remain aloft.

To make the imperial republic worth more than it costs the rest of the world is the one way to assure its survival in a world bristling with thermonuclear weapons. But the strain it will impose upon our resources of ingenuity, courage and determination is formidable beyond computation. Yet, "I will find a way or make one" was Hannibal's response when he was informed that the barrier of the Alps was impassable, and the phrase so fired the imagination of the race that it has been dinned into the ears of schoolboys in the first-year Latin class for more than a thousand years that *Inveniam viam aut faciam* is of the essence of Americanism. When all the earlier forms of democracy proved inconsistent with our new national status, we revamped democracy and made it fit. If old-style imperialism is incompatible with our present status, it, too, must be revamped to fit. The fact that there is no known way to do it is altogether irrelevant; the relevant fact is that, as one of our wisest put it, "every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation on some prophecy based on imperfect knowledge."

It follows that the first step toward the desired end is simplicity itself—all we have to do is resurrect Hannibal and put him in the White House.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Tumult of Talk

WILLIAM JOVANOVICH

PERHAPS THE PROOF that man is unique amongst all beings is his preoccupation with his own singularity. Apart from myth and theological argument, he has devised a number of pragmatic theorems. It was popular not long ago to say that man differs from other animals because he is a toolmaker: the evolvement of his thumb enabled him to fashion complex artifacts that gradually changed the face of the world—a wheel, a horse collar, barbed wire, a jet engine. Technology, however, has lost some of its wonderment, and, in any event, we become convinced that before man's advent there were apelike creatures who domesticated fire and wielded weapons. It is more usual now to define ourselves by our command of language. Only mankind can generate signals of communication of infinite variety; only mankind can speak with the use of symbols and therefore recall the past and suppose the future.

The literary critic George Steiner calls us "the language animal" and in support of his thesis he quotes Hesiod, Herder and Huxley—whose names in this chronological order sound like a well-established firm of brokers. Most frequently, he quotes Noam Chomsky. In the book *Language and Mind,* Chomsky says that "the examples of animal communication that have been examined to date do share many of the properties of human gestural systems . . . but human language, it appears, is based on entirely different principles . . . it seems rather pointless, for these reasons, to speculate about the evolution of human language from simpler systems. . . . As far as we know, possession of human language is associated with a specific type of mental organization, not simply a higher intelligence." This idea is also stated by George Gaylord

WILLIAM JOVANOVICH, a member of the Editorial Board of the SCHOLAR, is chairman and chief executive officer of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Copyright © 1971 by William Jovanovich.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Simpson, the evolutionary biologist, who says in his book *Biology and Man* that a child learns language by using a brain that is already organized for learning language. He concludes that "the capacity for language is an inherited genetic function of the human brain, and of no other animals now living."

Accepting that language is natural to man, one can easily plow ahead along biogenetic lines. Are some languages "native" or "natural" to particular races or groups? Are some forms of expression—dialects or idiomatic speech—more particular to certain peoples than other forms? But now one has really gone too far. One has, in fact, stumbled into a great argument over the issue of genetics and culture in the acquisition and uses of language. I cannot confidently enter my own views into this argument, for I lack the requisite scholarship, and were I to disguise my ignorance, the reader could not bide the time to uncover it. Let me state the argument simply and then proceed to my own thesis, which deals with what I call the "talking style" in contemporary American society.

There occurs in most civilizations a search for universal truths; there is a wish to formulate creditable propositions or axioms or rules. In the West we tend to accrete and adduce evidence in order to make a singleness or wholeness out of the multiplicity of circumstance. Certainly this has been the tendency of students of language, both philosophers and linguists, since the sixteenth century. Early on, they sought to establish a universal grammar, that is, a set of rules applicable to all modern languages. As we know, linguists seized upon Greek and Latin as models and described contemporary languages according to Latin terminology. This was plausible because the dominant European languages were part of the same division of the Indo-European family. Once scholars began in the twentieth century to study Asian, African, American Indian, Eskimo and other languages, the use of Latin terminology became absurd. The notion of a universal grammar was discarded.

The grammarian Paul Roberts said (in a letter to me composed shortly before his death) that "some people came to feel that there is nothing constant about human language . . . [and] set forth the view that the human being was entirely conditioned by the lan-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guage that he learned as a child, that this put him into a sort of private universe from which communication into other universes was difficult if not impossible." Roberts was here describing the thesis developed by Benjamin Lee Whorf, who had studied with Edward Sapir. There was, after World War II, a retreat from Whorf's "cultural" approach to language, led by structural linguists and later by the generative linguists, notably, Zelig Harris and Noam Chomsky. Once again, some investigators began searching for a universal grammar. Paul Roberts was convinced "that all human children learn their languages in about the same way, at about the same rate. The particular language involved doesn't make any difference. If Chinese, say, were fundamentally different from English, one might expect that it would also be fundamentally more difficult or more easy to learn, but this is clearly not so. . . . The only possible conclusion is that there must be important constants in two places—the learner and the thing learned. That is, the potential learner, the human child, must be particularly suited to language learning, and the language, whatever it is, must be some sort of system particularly suitable for being learned by a human being."

Hence, we arrive at the present time, when Dr. Chomsky uses the term "linguistic competence," meaning by this a biogenetic characteristic of all human beings, an innate neurological system that gives to infants a capacity to learn to speak a language without their being bounded, as they mature, by finite patterns of behavior. It is a dazzling theory! Chomsky believes that only since 1958 has it been possible to envision the formulating of a universal grammar. He is disputed by all sorts of litigants who hold an interest in the implications of his theory: among them are empiricist philosophers, anthropologists, behavioral psychologists and, of course, other linguists. I take the risk here of stating the terms of the dispute simplistically: genetics is stressed, rather than culture; innate qualities, rather than acquired ones; mathematical linguistics, rather than ethnical linguistics; a universal set of rules, rather than diverse and discrete rules. Even those people who seem to agree with Chomsky are worried by the untidiness of linguistic phenomena. George Steiner, for example, is troubled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the modern Babel, the existence of three or four thousand languages in the world today, which in his view is plainly an "anti-economic" multiplicity that has no analogue in nature. And George Gaylord Simpson, on considering that "perhaps the simpler languages are *less* primitive," must pause over the paradox that the first language on earth should have been the most complex.

It is a great puzzlement; and it ought to make us wary of speaking about the uses of language. It ought, but it does not. One of the cant notions of our time is that some forms of language are more "natural" and "credible" for some kinds of people; and that the qualities that attach to the words "feeling" and "consciousness" are more trustworthy in social intercourse than the qualities that attach to "reason" and "society." The distinction here is not one of preference or affinity, but of trustworthiness and credibility. A certain contrariness arises from misunderstandings about the development of discourse and the teaching of language.

Clearly, there is in contemporary America a preponderant attention to oral language. Television and radio and recordings comprise the dominant media in the lives of a populace who three decades ago would have depended upon newspapers and magazines. The interest in rock and country music is no less dependent upon the lyrics than upon the scores. "Rapping" is a popular term for conversation that has the especial connotation of self-revelation and truth-telling. The people who say they are alienated from society frequently recite a litany; *anomie* is so widespread that it paradoxically follows certain patterns, even norms, of expression. There is, in fact, so much talk in the land that it is declared quite seriously that the oral tradition of the past is being revived as a means to bring directness, simplicity and intimacy into people's lives. Some serious social critics believe that there exists in America a culture that is oral in media and communal in organization, a culture antithetical to the established society that favors competitive individualism and formal communication. That such a division exists is obvious; that it has much to do with the oral tradition of our past is doubtful.

What is called a revival of an oral tradition is little more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a mode that can be called "the talking life." The poet Homer lived in an oral culture, as did other Greeks of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. Robert Lowell lives in a literary culture, as do all of us in America today. It is impossible to recapture an oral culture in the midst of any society that depends on universal literacy and institutional government and economic specialization. It is impossible, precisely, in established communist countries, which teach and enforce a strict conformity of language. Yet in the United States some young people from middle-class white families and from minority groups are developing a talking style because, in part, they distrust conventional usage and literariness. Indeed, much of the "new" anti-intellectualism in our society, apart from political reactionaryism, is founded on the notion that speech is more "natural" than writing, and that talking to no purpose or talking at random is more reliable than discourse.

Actually, the oral tradition is more constrictive than written literature in its patterns of expression and composition. This is demonstrated in several works, but nowhere more clearly than in Albert Lord's *Singer of Tales.* Forty years ago Lord was able to study the oral composition of epic songs in Serbia and Montenegro, a form of creation akin to that of ancient folk sagas. He contrasts oral composition with the mere reciting of verses; the formulas used by the old Serbian storytellers he describes as the "grammar" of oral epic poetry. Lord states: "The oral singer thinks in terms of these formulas and formula patterns. He must do so in order to compose. But when writing enters, the 'must' is eliminated. . . . The breaking of the pattern occurs in rapid composition, but is always felt as wrong or awkward, or as a 'mistake.' When the point is reached that the break of the pattern is made consciously and is desired and felt to be 'right,' then we are in a 'literary' technique."

Applying these terms strictly, one can doubt that an oral culture exists in any advanced country today. Moreover, true oral composition rarely exists side by side with written, or memorized, composition. "Once the oral technique is lost," Lord says, "it is never regained." Yet people will continue to confuse the talking style, as I call it, with the oral tradition. A few years ago the New

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

York *Times* reported what it described as "a renewed focus on the meaning and style of lyrics" in the recordings of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and Rod McKuen. Although it was said that some of the lyrics are "embarrassingly bad" and it was noted that Kenneth Rexroth and Allen Ginsberg had earlier failed in their attempt to marry poetry to jazz, a defense was made of "this very old and yet very new art form [for] it must be pointed out that the new lyrics are part of a media mix in which the words are designed to go with melody and arrangements." A well-known professor was quoted as saying of this development: " 'After all, Homer was chanted and so were the Scandinavian epics. I think in general the movement is great. They can arrive at standards later.' " This is a confounding of common sense. Was not Robert Burns writing with the aid of a so-called media mix? Homer wrote in the oral tradition, casting ahead always and not stopping to substitute phrases or revise lines. How is one, then, to compare Homer with Rod McKuen, who writes lyrics, memorizes them, and then sings them? And why should we await standards when we have them now? No one should hesitate to judge the talent of Bob Dylan.

What has emerged is, I think, a living style that especially characterizes "the Young," which is to say, those youths who feel alienated from the elder generation because they believe it to be compromised by the past. As a caste, "the Young" embrace a living style that is marked by talk, round-and-round, ritualistic talk. There is talk with music (tapes and records), talk with film and tape (movies and television), talk with live public performance (demonstrations and "confrontations"). The talking style is practiced by others than the alienated, the outsiders. There is the faddish phenomenon of the "encounter" and "sensitivity" groups who elicit from their members a confessional self-analysis as a kind of therapy. There are, also, the day and night television "talk shows" that appeal to huge audiences, the audiences who three decades ago followed the lives of celebrities in newspapers and magazines and in the movies but who now attend the notorious and the famous by listening to their conversation. The air is a tumult of talk.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Plainly, we are not witnessing a revival of the oral tradition, for it cannot be regained. We live in a world dependent on reading and writing; yet it would seem that talking is valued as being more sincere, more genuine, more natural—a means of "relating" one group to another, one person to another, and indeed one person to himself. This phenomenon is, I think, anti-intellectual. Its negative quality emerges from the controversies over ways to teach English to school children. Not long ago teachers taught English according to what they presumed were "correct" standards, but now practically everyone knows that "schoolmarm English" was not sensible either as a linguistic discipline or as an instructional practice. Language should not be guarded or cosseted against its own times. Some years ago, the linguist Wayne O'Neil attacked the textbooks written by Paul Roberts. "It would be madness," he wrote, "to believe that a knowledge of how an internal combustion engine works . . . would contribute to one's driving skill. . . . So with language: to contemplate your internalized grammar while using it might tie your tongue and pen forever." Now, I could agree with this position had the author made distinctions between syntax and usage and diction. But O'Neil does not, and it leads him to say that "to choose [these books] for a ghetto school would be ludicrous. The simplest objection is that the language of these books is not the language of Roxbury and Harlem, much as it may be the language of Newton or Scarsdale." I find that statement to be ludicrous. Unwittingly, it is a part of the anti-intellectualism that emerges in the current discussion of language in relation to society.

The language of Harlem is not *the* language, in any event: it is not proprietary; it is not fixed. It changes rapidly; indeed, within a generation it will probably become indistinguishable from the language of Westchester. What is more, the blacks who live in Harlem understand and recognize two kinds of English usage: the street kind as distinct from the schoolroom (and television) kind. It is repeatedly suggested that black children should be provided with books that imitate street language: for example, "My grandmother she cook greens"—this being a sentence I found in a primer that was experimentally used in a Chicago school. Most

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

black educators agree that presenting such usage to children is quite useless. A child who can read that sentence will also be able to read "My grandmother cooks greens," and if he is confronted with such writing he will be affronted. The truth is that most people, including children, can comprehend several forms of usage at the same time, just as they persist in speaking with regional accents while they accept the quite different pronunciation they hear on television. A barely literate man who was recently interviewed by a marriage counselor on television said: "I was not adjusted to my family and I failed my responsibilities." He may have chosen this usage because it was the cliché of the counselor, but largely, I think, he was imitating the kind of mock-academic, bureaucratic language that is common on television. At home he would speak differently, no doubt, along with belting his wife.

The point is that Harlem children cannot in the long run be taught well from books written in a volatile street argot. They should be encouraged to express themselves in whatever language they can handle most creatively. Their usage should not be corrected, or graded, until such time as they themselves seek to expand their vocabularies, to avoid ambiguities, and to express generalizations—metaphor and concept. They can from the start read books that contain standard American usage because they are able to handle both kinds of usage, street and book. It is a misplaced sympathy that allows one to suppose that the language of the street is more "natural" than the language of the book, that the "folk" are to be trusted to speak the truth in their own tongue. All current languages are natural in the sense of being learnable. If children are born with a linguistic competence, as Dr. Chomsky says, then the question of what languages (and dialects of languages) they learn becomes a matter of social and political and, of course, individual choice. That is the crux of this particular issue in education; it cannot be disguised.

The children from minority groups need to be taught standard American usage so that they can increase their learning and prepare for vocations. The instruments of both citizenship and employment are written in this language, these being books, journals, newspapers, films, forms, memoranda, instructions, letters. In the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

matter of language, it is not a question of what is natural—which in any event has no linguistic basis—but, rather, a question of what is socially and personally useful. For this reason, I deplore the political expedience that leads the State of New York to allow civil service examinations to be conducted in Spanish—an accommodation that makes no more sense than conducting them in Polish or Italian. There is a reason to teach Spanish in American schools, but it is not so that Spanish-speaking children will be delayed in learning English thoroughly. The reason is that Spanish is, with English, the major language of South and North America.

Speech is, of course, the fundament in human language, whereas writing is a secondary symbolization. This distinction must be made by linguists and instructors of language. But the problems of sentence-making are the same for both speech and writing; and for the person who would be educated, who would find interest in his work and learning in his leisure, the distinction between speech and writing is of no great importance. It is sentiment or prejudice that leads one to believe that the language of "the people" is of a different provenance from that of the language of formal discourse. The trust in the immediacy of talk and, oppositely, distrust of the formal means of communication can result only from a failure to comprehend the nature of language, from a misascription of the oral tradition, and from an unwillingness to define the social and political choices that are always made in the uses of language.

Language is the central civilizing instrument of our polity. To mistake its function in the ways I have described is to degrade linguistics into sentiment, and to turn logic into melodrama. Written standard English is of course the product of an acquired skill, just as instrumental music is learned from observation and practice. In the preparation of teaching materials, as well as in the testing of individual achievement, there are obvious difficulties presented by the variety of dialects and forms of usage—and, in contemporary America, by the seemingly ceaseless need to teach and reteach the fundamentals of reading. These difficulties will not be dissipated by appeal to racial or political factionalism. Nothing is sacred about standard American English, but there is some-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing practical about it: the procedures of American business, government, and national communication are conducted through its medium. There is no right and true way to teach reading and writing to a child who speaks a language, or indeed to teach a second language to child or adult, but one begins somewhere. To begin is the thing.

And if one begins, how should he end? The right result is obtained, I think, when there is expression that is plain in intent, consonant in tone, and explicit in meaning. Everyman's innate competence to learn language is perhaps warranted to him with life, but his very own, his particular use of language is neither promised nor foretold. His command of language is enlarged and freed by desire, by practice, and by reward. That is a plain prescription, but it is not fusty. It is a prescription that can be made even in our day, and in this republic, where the myriad revolutions and liberations are carried out not to the sounds of jackboots and gunfire but to the din of rapping, rapping, rapping, and to the endless dialogues between I and Thou. Take heart, gentle listener. Even Caliban, who learned language only to curse, was not unhinged. "Be not afeard," he said. "The isle is full of noises."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The First Altar

PAUL SMYTH

> *And [he] passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh . . . and there builded he an altar unto the Lord.*

Sarah

Nine grey dawns I have stood here watching him start:
He climbs toward the oak, slowly among the stones,
And leans against that tree with such weight that all
The dawn trembles, threatens to sway and collapse.

Then he begins the working: crouching, lifting
The day's first stone, fitting it—and the next one,
And steadily as the sun climbs, steadily
All day long speaking hardly a word, building

Till the last of dusk. He will finish today
But even at the end there is no gladness,
He stays slow and full of grieving. The fear crawls
Into my heart—shall I gather these hard hours

And build with them an altar in memory,
A monument made of the time of dying?

Abraham

Stones, the stones that lay on the plain of Moreh,
I have gathered stones, now I fit them unhewn—
Here, a small flat one I can wedge between these
    Two that are wobbling—

Now I learn this craft, I construct an altar.
Sweat is in my eyes and the rippling noon heat

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clogs my dusty throat. And my palms are raw, my
Knuckles are bleeding.

Here a thin dread clings in my mouth, metallic,
I have entered Canaan and walk alone. Here
Fathers dip leaves torn from an oak in hot blood
Drawn from a bull's throat,

Then they press those leaves to the face of each son,
Mark them men of Canaan. They bless new furrows:
Fire is brought in jars to the field and women
Chant as the fire flows.

Here men worship priests for their own sake—shall man
Smash the spirit's order, then praise the pieces?
I begin: by making the stones of Canaan
Stone of my altar—

Canaan, lift your eyes, and your hearts, and know Him!
Here I build stone steps and a circular platform,
Here the calf shall burn for the sake of God, and
Here shall the ram burn,

Flames shall scorch night winds and the smell of burnt flesh
Rise on heavy smoke—and a swollen hunger
Fill the darkness, roll in the wind, tremendous,
Swallowing cities.

Sarah

If I tried to talk to him, tell him the ache,
The burning, tell him how all my love for him
Knots hot in my chest when I see his hands bleed,

If I tried to speak to him now to tell him
Just a part of what I am when I see him
Bent over, straining to lift a heavy rock,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The way white sunlight glints on his arms and back
Then slides down the sizzling air into my eyes,
Slicing thin and hot toward the back of my head,

If I tried again to tell him just some part,
Anything of the distance and helplessness

If I dug my fingernails into his back
Tearing open his flesh then kissed it gently

Soothing all that pain with kisses cool as milk

Abraham

Evening breathes long sighs through the grass, the pale leaves
Speak in small hushed phrases beside the altar.
Slowly, through this moment of flowing stillness,
    All of my journey

Comes to this one thing I have done. And surely
Something more than man was conceived and done here;
Decades shall not scatter these stones, nor darkness
    Teach them to crumble.

Far from Canaan's hills, at the earth's horizons,
Darkness trembles now in response to this shape,
Swells and starts to move. And the darkness hurries,
    Closing toward Sichem—

Now a gathered tremor of leaves, a warning,
Now the night glides down in a whirlpool rush but
Hesitates: the center of dark stands still, is
    Known by the thing built.

✪ PAUL SMYTH's poems have appeared in *Atlantic, Beloit Poetry Journal, Massachusetts Review, Midwest Quarterly, Sewanee Review* and other periodicals. "The First Altar" is from *Thistles and Thorns: Lyrics of Abraham and Sarah,* a book-length poem-in-progress. Mr. Smyth teaches English at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The One Right Way to Write and Think?

BENJAMIN DEMOTT

IT IS *in the boutiques devoted to [young miss] fashion . . . that the diffuse erotic powers latent in dress and skirt, outer garments and underwear, ribbons and frills tend to gather and spread themselves; but it is, above all, in the fitting-rooms of such places that they achieve maximum concentration and intensity . . . Undressing in such circumstances is somewhere halfway between doing it in your own bedroom and performing a strip-tease act. You contemplate and rediscover your own person, under the intimate yet unfamiliar self-to-self gaze which the mirror reflects. It is by no means uncommon for a girl to be accompanied by her boy-friend, or to leave the curtain half open. . . . Narcissism and exhibitionism flourish here with naïve abandon. The setting both encourages and exonerates them. . . . If the salesgirl's hands linger a moment during the fitting, this is willingly construed as a lesbian caress or invitation. Every dress that is tried on provokes fresh mannequin-like poses, more attitudinizing, a physical performance calculated to set off fantasy sequences in the mind. It is all a game, a dream, a metamorphosis. You came here to choose a dress; but you would like to try on other dresses, the most attractive and expensive ones. You want a whole mass of dresses—not to mention all those other nice things, so strange and so seductive, which are apparently being offered you . . . You feel, at some deep level, that the fitting room is, at one and the same time, the erogenic setting in which a young girl transforms herself into a source of seduction and an object of desire; the dream-palace in which her physical*

BENJAMIN DEMOTT has taught English at Amherst College for twenty years. His latest book is *Surviving the 70's.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nakedness, and her metamorphoses, give rise to a thousand fantasies; and a place of temptation which sets her desires aflutter. It is, in fact, a hothouse where the fantastic, the seductive and the erotic mingle and stimulate one another. . .

—Edgar Morin, *Rumour in Orléans* (1971)

In May, 1969, the French city of Orléans (population, 430,000) was shaken by an outbreak of anti-Semitism that drove it close to chaos. Rumor claimed that the owners of a half-dozen downtown boutiques were drugging schoolgirls with hypo needles in basement fitting-rooms and selling them into white slavery. The shops were linked by underground tunnels, so went the loony vicious tale—and submarines or cruisers stole up from the Loire to the mouth of the tunnel system to cart away the girls—and all the high muckamucks in town—the cops, the papers, the city's governors —everybody was on the take, paid off *"by the Jews."* Hysteria came on fast among old and young, respectable and kinky:

. . . on Saturday morning, 31 May, the market-place was like a cyclone area. Housewives who had come in from all the suburbs round central Orléans were bursting with alarm and indignation. Crowds gathered outside the more accessible shops—*Dorphée, Félix,* and *La Boutique de Sheila* . . . In *La Boutique de Sheila* Jeanette Buki . . . felt as though she was under siege, and expected an angry mob to break in at any moment. The evening before, one of the assistants at *Alexandrine* had been dragged off by her husband, who burst in shouting: "I'm not going to let you stay in this place a moment longer!"

Slowly—shockingly slowly—the local establishment awoke to the crisis. Prodded by editorial outcries in the national press *(Le Monde* in the forefront), and LICA *(Ligue internationale contre le racisme and l'antisémitisme)* and MRAP *(Mouvement contre le racisme and l'antisémitisme et pour la paix),* the city fathers managed at length to launch a counteroffensive against the rumor—statements and denunciations extracted from unions, the chamber of commerce, municipal officials, the bishopric. Luck held and the city recovered its balance in time to avert physical violence. But the question raised by the incident—namely, what brought the Jew-baiting madness on in the first place—would not melt away.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Jewish Social Foundation in Paris was skeptical of "answers" that prattled about ineradicable "prejudice" and the like. It approached Edgar Morin, currently the most controversial and considerable new European reputation in sociology, offering to fund an on-the-spot inquiry into the origins and diffusion of the white slavery myth. Morin, a self-styled "sociologist of the present" whose research concentrates on exceptional rather than typical experience, accepted the offer and set to work with a team of specialists —experts in popcultural content analysis, orthodox interviewers, researchers in psychology and anthropology. The report on their findings appeared in America this fall as *Rumour in Orléans* (Pantheon).

It is, by turns, an absorbing, frightening, frustrating and brilliant report. Morin's team quickly sleuthed its way to a literary source for the rumor. (An English compilation of erotico-sexual news items published in 1968 and later excerpted in a Paris mass-circulation magazine, contained a paragraph about "a case in Grenoble" in which a man took his wife to a store for a dress fitting, couldn't find a parking space, kept driving around the block until suspicion drew him into the shop where he was told nobody'd seen his wife. He called the police, a search was laid on, and the woman was found in the basement of the building—"guarded by a young man, she was asleep. On her arm, the detectives found the mark of an injection.") From here the investigators moved on to track out the "incubatory process" of the rumor—the search led to classes of young schoolgirls at a lycée and two Catholic colleges, and to some working teen-agers in shops and offices—and the oral network by which the story traveled outside the city proper. ("It spread by way of hairdressing salons and other public meeting places [e.g., the market-place]; from these groups it reached the parents, colleagues and fellow-employees, swarming out towards the suburbs and the countryside. From adolescents and teenage girls it spread to grown women. By the time it really exploded, even the men were . . . convinced by it.") Then, with the stages of dissemination sharply defined, the investigators undertook depth interviews and a variety of other projects aimed at assessing the pivotal psychocultural factors that transformed a magazine snippet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into an instrument of terror—a myth capable of rousing human beings by the thousand to ferocity.

Not the least interesting of the latter factors are those illustrating a "resonant conjunction" of modern and archaic elements in late-twentieth-century minds. The vocabulary of slander aimed at the boutique owners, for example, drew not only on familiar, time-disgraced versions of Jewish otherness—the "phantom of the Jew as traditionally pictured . . . the phantom of Judas and the Tempter"—but on rationalizations issuing from contemporary dimness about economics. From the moment of their opening, the boutiques—presumably they resemble places like Biba in London—seem to have presented a quandary to young girls and their mothers: shouldn't Parisian-level chic be more costly? "The [white slavery] myth [provided] a solution to [the] economic puzzle: the dresses sell cheap, but the women they entice fetch a very good price indeed." On every side, furthermore, the investigators came on hang-ups traceable to effort at adjusting old guilt to new freedom. Invited by the new permissiveness into a hundred formerly forbidden self-indulgences, schoolgirls hovered between *yéyé* fantasies and the remembered imperatives of restraint and frugality, and seemed compelled by the promptings of guilt to invent dangers, temptations, fears (see the fitting-room passage above). And the girls' teachers were scarcely less irrational. Pressed hard by the easygoing popculture to justify an outmoded uptightness, the teachers saw in the rumor a way of playing on fears of the outside world and revivifying their own influence, and they were slow to kill it.

The investigators shy away from a single "causal explanation"; lunatic energy of a dozen kinds played a part in the episode. But *Rumour in Orléans* establishes that a crucial factor was a condition of political underdevelopment or civic illiteracy—a fearful lack of knowledge "about how the . . . urban district's administrative, social and political machinery functions." Morin and his associates connect this condition with the special historical situation of Orléans itself—a city losing its provincial identity because of modernization, yet unable, because of suburbanization, to achieve metropolitan sophistication. ("Orléans the provincial town and Or-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

léans the urban agglomeration found themselves attuned to one another. The rumor put about in the modern agglomeration by schoolgirls, typists and shop-assistants triggered off a wave of malicious tittle-tattle among the provincial gossips of an older generation . . .") And while members of Morin's team occasionally quarrel among themselves about which group within the society bears the heaviest burden of responsibility, they are in solid agreement on one issue: moralistic indictments are useless. Insofar as they began with a thesis, it was that the concept of a permanent continuum of "hatred" as the source of the outbreak was faulty: no simplistic moral vocabulary could ever encompass the social, psychological, historical and political variables figuring in the Orléans equation. And the effect of the book as a whole is richly to confirm that thesis.

As for the relevance of all this to us: it is easy to overstate it, of course. Fort Worth, Louisville, Columbus—they don't much resemble Orléans. And, in any event, the notion that irrational behavior—bus-burning, for instance—has complex causes hardly ranks as news: the dogmas of structuralism have been extensively publicized in recent years, and awareness of the intricate relationships of "belief systems" with social and psychological "conditioners" has markedly increased. In passing it ought to be noted, though, that, under pressure of despair or rage, this awareness invariably wobbles.

Attending an interracial teaching conference in Georgia recently, the present writer saw a night session whipped to intensity by a report from Atlanta's vice-mayor on the fearful beating of Rico Carty by white inner-city cops. Earlier speakers had dwelt on the flight of whites from the inner city and on newer forms of humiliation suffered by blacks in school districts of "the new South," and in that context the graphic account of the beating struck home all the harder. One after another came voices of clenched fury, angry, anguished challenges from the floor. —This yammer about "seeing the complexities," "understanding," "the promise of education," and so forth—what was it but crap? What else is there to black-white relations—in the schools, cities, suburbs, anywhere—except King Racism on his throne? What is rac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ism but hatred, plain hatred—one-dimensional, pure, instinctive, inevitable, always the same?—In previous days whites and blacks alike had clung to an arduously built consciousness of the multidimensional character of racism, its links with the sense of powerlessness, with fear of crime, dollar interests, and ignorance of civic procedures. The forceful presence of Coretta King, patiently and wearily insisting once again on the feasibility of black-white coalitions and the uselessness of all alternatives of desperation, restored that consciousness, sustained a grasp of things as they are, fought off simplism. But the small episode told, in its way, of the fragility of "complex understandings": nothing weaker on earth in the face of moral fury, nothing more indispensable if beatings are ever to end. Morin's Orléans story has a bearing on this point.

But in truth it's not for topical relevance that this sociologist's writings demand notice: what counts about them is, to use an unfashionable and ugly word, their methodology, their vision of how a scientist ought to work and what a scientist should aim to be. Not every feature of this methodology is as fascinating as it is plausible. Morin is committed, as already suggested, to the study of a specific life event or crisis, rather than to analysis of patterns of normative behavior. ("A crisis is, for any social system, at one and the same time the most disturbing and the most informative phenomenon known to it . . . a significant indicator of those conflicting realities which play a life-and-death role within the fabric of every society.") He is antispecialist through and through ("we advocate a multidimensional grasp of phenomena, which forces itself to assimilate the findings of *all* disciplines and *all* methods"), and inclined to risk-taking and intervention ("in addition to observation, we also provoked test situations . . . Our experience . . . brought us to the conclusion that intervention [is] a necessary method of research"). A ground-theme in his books is that confusion of historical consciousness is a dominant characteristic of contemporary minds. The theme figures not only in the contrast of provincial-urban sensibility developed in *Rumour in Orléans,* but as the chief conceptual scheme of Morin's *The Red and the White* (1970), a study of traditional Breton radical and conservative sensibilities responding to the pressure of moderniza-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. And the notion of the present as an historical betweenness—*"nous sommes entre deux mondes, l'un pas encore mort, l'autre pas encore né"*—sounds throughout his *Introduction à une politique de l'homme* (1965), a work still untranslated here.

But the key assumption, that which distinguished from the first this writer's work, is that nothing human or social can be understood apart from realities of individual human feeling—realities that are particular in nature and unknowable save through the resource of sympathy. What transforms an "orderly" city into a howling mass of Jew-baiters? Morin knows that no inconsiderable part of the answer to that question flows from the nature of individual human feelings in particular human situations—a schoolgirl's feelings, say, while she's trying on a new dress in a shop. What is the political structure of a Breton village undergoing urbanization likely to become? Morin finds answers not alone through theoretical formulations but through inquiry into feelings and attitudes that is minute, firsthand and precise. He probes deepest when a peasant, scorned by the citified servant girls of the town, tells him what it feels like to work with a new tractor, sitting high over its "rumbling mass," or when a confident petit-bourgeois suddenly begins berating peasants for their stupid stinginess ("they could buy a lot of things, but they won't let go of their precious money"), or when a rich doctor speaks of his inward "feeling of futility both in work and outside it . . . [deploring] the fact that he does not do anything really thoroughly in his spare time."

Preoccupation with grainy human response doesn't block off Morin's mind from generalizations, and his belief in the efficacy of individual acts of sympathetic imagination doesn't inhibit his interest in "collective" experience. The subject of many a sentence is "they":

> Teenagers and young girls stand, as it were, at the intersection of [ethical, political, affective, existential] voids, in the hollow centre of a vast communal emptiness. They feel this condition as one of boredom no less than anxiety; or rather, in them the various anxieties linked with sex, entry into adult life, and the new modernity become indistinguishably mixed up with the special urban anxiety we have been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

discussing. It is they who feed most avidly on those poetic fancies disseminated by magazines, especially women's magazines. They are hedged about with boredom, anxiety and uneasiness. Perhaps that is why they picked on a shop in the town-centre, and at one stroke turned it into something out of fable, depositing there a Pandora's box from which all else would spring—the drug element, the Jekyll-and-Hyde Jew, the descent into the depths, the voyage overseas, prostitution.

But, to repeat, the generalizations are rooted in efforts to inhabit moments of experience as known by particular persons. "The qualities needed in observation," says this writer, are:

> an interest equally sustained in general ideas, concrete realities, and men and women in their uniqueness. The purely professional attitude, on the other hand, atrophies perception; a monomaniacal interest in a single idea distorts that idea; indifference to human beings is blindness; indifference to ideas blinds one to the proliferation of signs of which the phenomenal world is composed; an inadequate capacity to interpret leads to an inadequate capacity to perceive . . .

And implicit in the statement is the conviction that genuinely adequate social investigation requires a new kind of "scientist"—a figure willing to curb the lust for objectification, and capable of sustaining his own humanness in every act of observation and reflection:

> In most of our methods a lack of sympathy would be a grave obstacle . . . The researcher must constantly elucidate what he feels and reflect on his experience. He cannot escape his internal duality. Moreover, this duality must be apparent to the subject-object of the inquiry. The fact that he carries a tape recorder with him wherever he goes designates him in his objective capacity as a "scientist," while daily contact shows him to be a human being like everyone else. In fact, he must be both practitioner and friend. He must be like everyone else and also the possessor of special knowledge like the priest and the doctor. The art of the sociological inquiry is to experience this dual personality internally and express it externally, to dialectically enrich participation and objectification . . .

Looked at as a "friend," Morin has failings. His talk is never wholly jargon-free (maieutic, social praxis, phenomenographic and other lumps are frequent). Modesty isn't his hallmark, his writing style is often repetitious and overexclamatory, and his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

faith in his "diagnoses" of other people's insides is sometimes too blithe. Fairness calls for an acknowledgment that the man is unusually aware both of his own and his discipline's pretenses and vanities, and is seldom humorless. *The Red and the White* opens with a scene in which Morin remembers how he showed off absurdly to a team member on arriving to begin investigating a village in transition:

> Sensing that Peninou, the young research worker to whom I hoped to leave the day-to-day running of the project, and himself a Breton, was even more intimidated than I was, I decided to give him a demonstration of the sociological human touch. So, summoning up courage, we entered the *Rendez-vous des Pecheurs* at Pors-Ensker. There were about seven or eight fishermen, probably in their late fifties, and a woman behind the bar. Imagining that I was dabbling in local color, I ordered, in as steady a voice as I could muster, two glasses of cider liqueur. Unfortunately I did not realize, in the first place, that this *alcool,* or dry liqueur, is called *lambic* in those parts, and, secondly, that its sale is forbidden. The company exchanged sly looks. My confidence crushed, I ordered cognac.

Partly because of his air of omnicompetence, partly because he does, after all, poach a little on literary territories, partly because of the somewhat threatening range of his sympathies, Morin rarely wins high marks in literary circles. (He has been especially roughly treated in literary-page articles in England.)

But the man has virtues that more than make up for the absence of a satisfactory literary manner. One is the habit of inclusiveness. To Morin's way of thinking, seemingly, nobody is expendable; no illiteracy, or lack of power, or gracelessness, or poverty, or crude philistinism can justifiably be excluded from sympathetic inquiry. Given the tight interdependencies of contemporary existence, the Jew-baiter, the nice lad on the tractor, the rich sour professional, the beamish tourist, the university radical—each must be met as he imagines himself to be, and as he in fact exists in relation to others: there is no other way to adequate human truth or decent social policy.

A second strength is that Morin isn't bland about "decent social policy." He possesses a mind mobile enough to act on the variousness of his own sympathies, and isn't trapped in the kind of impas-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sivity common among interpreters of "conflicting points of view." Faced with meanness or brutality he's neither neutral nor helpless nor locked into the traditional tone and stance of a class, profession or method. He presses himself for knowledge of how each part works on every part of the common life of men *in order to have an effect*—to stave off a repetition of brutality or to ease the mysteries of a culture in transition.

Finally—it can't be too often repeated—the man particularizes. Inside the social dynamic, inside every deed whether horrendous or golden, persons breathe: they occupy space in his pages, never vanish into abstract forces, aren't sacrificed on the altar of System.—Does the existence of a particularizing moral imagination in a field-oriented social scientist in Paris betoken an imminent breakthrough of the thick and ancient walls separating "the humanities," "the arts," "the social sciences" from each other? Not likely: comparable qualities have shone forth for years in David Riesman's pages without exactly effecting a revolution. Men of the arts will continue (for a while yet) keening about cultural decline, the wounds of the elite, and so forth, and men of science, for their part, will go on rejoicing (for a while yet) about measuring less and less more and more precisely. The point isn't that salvation is at hand: it's simply that the publication of Morin's books here brings some freshness into the corridor (notions of a new direction for hunters of the One Right Way to think and write and be) and, on the practical side, provides first-rate counsel for social planners at work on a welfare program or a "low-income housing project," or any scheme touching "men in the mass." Is it possible ever to open a gift of this sort, blown in from outside, a lucky surprise, without wanting to clap and grin?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Common Enough Story

Featuring the Muse

Edward Weismiller

"Low is cold," she said slowly, "and tired
Is not high. Quit
Bringing me
Down. For a while just
Go, will you, and give me time to breathe."
Mockingly, "Of your grace,
Give me breathing space."

So I went and sat down in the next room.
I could hear her breathing. At first slow,
After a while
Faster and faster. She said "Oh!"
She said "Oh, wow!" and twenty-three seconds later
"Oh, *How*ard!" Well, I walked in.
It was Howard. Younger than I am, OK,
OK, a better poet, but in my own house?

And I can work up some nice rhythms too.

I said "OK, but in my own house?"

Howard rolled off, his backside toward me. She
Raised up on one elbow, naked rose
And gold, oh beloved! "Listen,"
She said. "What I do is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My own affair, is that clear? As for you,
If I have to say it, save up.
You may write one good poem when you're ninety-seven."

She said,
"I sincerely hope you live to *be* ninety-seven."

I cannot help it. She is so beautiful.
And whatever she says, her voice is
So beautiful.

✪ EDWARD WEISMILLER has published two books of poems and a novel. A prosodist and a Milton scholar, he is a member of the board of editors of *A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton*. He is professor of English at the George Washington University in Washington, D. C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Venetian Notes: Experiencing the City

DAVID HANDLIN

WHEN MARK TWAIN VISITED VENICE in 1867, he was not impressed by the monuments and sites that had elicited an endless stream of flattering adjectives from European writers. The canals were "dismal ditches," the gondola a "crusty old canoe," and Saint Mark's Cathedral "a vast and warty bug taking a meditative walk." Since Twain's deflating barrage, the impressions of visitors have followed a uniform pattern. They find it necessary first to say that the decaying city is not all that it is reputed to be: sometimes the canals smell, often the streets are downright dingy, and, besides, the Titians and Tintorettos quickly become repetitious. But once the record has been set straight about these matters, almost everyone admits, at first grudgingly and then with increasing enthusiasm, that Venice, despite everything, has a vitality that elevates the simplest act of everyday life to the level of adventure.

In an old city, especially one like Venice that has been fortuitously left so intact, the traveler can escape the industrialized world of Europe or America and feel that he is participating in a life that could have taken place several centuries ago. As he leaves his car in a parking garage on the outskirts of the city and walks the narrow streets, he might occasionally wonder why the place he comes from is so humdrum, but he can easily explain away his present experience as something that belongs irretrievably to the past. Besides, this is a vacation. Everyday life is supposed to be more subdued. So, for most people leaving Venice is like waking from a dream. Being there was a pleasant interlude, but it did not have much to do with life in the twentieth century.

✪ DAVID HANDLIN recently received a master's degree in architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He lived in Venice while working on the final drawings of the Venice Hospital, designed by Le Corbusier, which is now being posthumously completed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Architects, designers and city planners, whose business is knowing how environments work, should not be so quick to come to this conclusion. They have spent most of this century straightening out, rebuilding and adding onto old cities to make them suitable for automobile traffic and an economy of office buildings, department stores, factories and housing developments. But now that buildings have become so large and cities so fragmented, it is more and more necessary to understand the qualities that contributed to the vitality of old cities and to find out how their equivalents can be placed into a modern context.

Clearly, mimicking the external shell of old cities—narrow streets and irregular buildings—is not the answer. Recent attempts to emulate these characteristics have produced only quaint but vapid variations of banal building patterns. In the same way, the design in so many downtown districts of impressive buildings and open plazas—modeled on the great European squares—has done little to revitalize the adjacent area. In these false environments something is always lacking.

The importance of Venice does not come from its monuments or great spaces. In fact, with several marvelous exceptions, few elements of the townscape are aesthetically significant or worthy of special note by art historians. Instead, what is so distinctive in Venice is the city's ability to act not only as a backdrop but also as a subtle catalyst for vital experiences. Venice is more than a pleasing collection of buildings, streets, canals, bridges and open places. Above everything else, Venice, as an environment, actively encourages a continuous process of human engagement. In newer cities this is the quality that either has been forgotten or is no longer considered important.

In Venice this character is most often revealed in simple, almost imperceptible, ways. At several points along the wide Grand Canal there are large gondolas, called *traghetti,* that act as ferries and take passengers from one side to the other. Since the ride is short, the custom is to stand in the *traghetto* for the duration of the trip. Often sizable boats creating large wakes pass up and down the Grand Canal. The *traghetti* are big enough and the gondoliers sufficiently skillful for the passengers to remain stable, but a certain

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amount of footwork and balance is necessary. One watches the water, the passing boats, the strokes of the gondoliers and the approaching landing. Even getting into and leaving the bobbing *traghetto* is a deliberate act. All ages can do it, and yet it takes a certain amount of care. The result is that one is a participant in the process of movement. The trip becomes more than just getting from one side to the other.

This sense of involvement can also happen on motor-driven boats. The Venetian bus, the *vaporetto,* is a lumbering hulk, often reconditioned from a previous use and usually not very well maintained. It plies its way down the Grand Canal, around the perimeter of the city and out to the Lido, making scheduled stops. By any standards it is not an impressive vessel, but the very functioning of the boat is fascinating, no matter how many trips one has made. The driver is well worth watching. Instead of being closeted away in his own cabin, he stands near the center of the boat in an open area. You can see him manipulate the levers, and you can read the dials as he maneuvers the *vaporetto* through the canals and nudges it toward the landing. Then you can relate the movement of his arms to the thud of the boat as it hits the protective rubber tires hanging over the side of the dock. Simultaneously, you turn to watch a deckhand throw a rope over a bollard on the landing to secure the boat. Usually he makes it, but sometimes he misses. These everyday actions have a degree of drama, of unpredictability, that envelops everyone, both the passengers and those who operate the boat. The close contact with the functioning of the *vaporetto* makes the trip unexpectedly intriguing.

This subtle engagement of inactive participants in an event is helped by, but does not depend on, the fact that boats travel over the rough and unpredictable surface of water. Riding in airplanes, trains, buses or automobiles in old cities or new could also be as absorbing, but this does not happen by accident. The vehicle and the process of movement have to be consciously designed to achieve this involvement; unfortunately they rarely are.

I often find getting onto an airplane very pleasing. Walking out from the waiting room onto the airfield puts you into a unique relationship with the airplane and finally forces you to understand

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the enormous scale of the specks you see darting across the sky every day. Then, when you climb the windy gangplank and hold onto the railing, you are called upon to do a little more than walk up just another staircase. Stepping over the rim of the cabin door and bending down at the same time enhances the sense of entrance. All of this increases the feeling of expectation about the trip.

None of these experiences are possible with the system that involves an elevated corridor chute that takes you directly from the waiting room to the plane. This may be more efficient, but you have no view of the outside or sense of transition. Even if the terminal had to be built in this way, at least the chute could be made of a transparent material so you could see the plane and the airfield below. It is now possible to fly from one terminal to another and never see the airplane in which you traveled. The point is that the designer did not think about the significance of the experience, so it is nothing more than just getting from the waiting room to the plane.

No matter how you enter, once you get on the plane the trip cannot be over fast enough. You have no idea how the huge piece of machinery functions or is operated. The pilot probably has to be isolated for safety reasons but, in addition, you are restricted to your seat, except to go to the bathroom. There is no chance, as there is on long-distance trains or large boats, to take a legitimate walk to experience the operations of the flight from different vantage points. In fact, the intention is just the opposite. You are supposed to act as though there is nothing unusual in tons of machinery flying several hundred miles an hour in the air. Most people, however, cannot be so nonchalant. Concentrating on a book or a magazine is difficult, and it is even hard to watch the movie. It is best to sleep or to prime yourself with the drinks that are conveniently sold. The airplane flight is a nonevent; we live through it and accept it as an unexplained gap in our lives. Like other modern experiences, flying is just a means to an end; the shorter it lasts the better.

Such empty occasions are rare in Venice, where even walking is underlined with a half-conscious significance. All the Venetian streets, from the narrow alleys, the *calli,* to the open squares, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

campi, are paved with large, flat, rectangular stones. At first glance the pavement seems to be strictly utilitarian, not even worth noticing. Throughout the city the paving patterns are quite uniform. Actually, there are many finer, more varied, examples of the art of paving elsewhere in Europe. But the Venetian paving has a subtle importance for the act of walking. The cracks between the stones are just wide and deep enough so that the foot has to be cognizant of where it is going. This never happens to the degree that the pavement becomes an impediment or a hazard. But there is a kind of elusive communication between eye and foot that makes walking a little more significant.

This phenomenon is even more evident in crossing the foot bridges that join the opposite sides of the canals. These spans must be arched for boats to pass underneath, so there is a sequence of steps that leads up from one side and then at the middle of the bridge starts down to the other. The steps rarely are the same length or height, and they often have been pitted by continuous wear over the centuries. Crossing the bridges involves neither the automatic movement we make on uniform staircases nor that self-conscious solemnity forced upon us by grand staircases. When you cross the Venetian bridges you are not distracted from your main concern, but a barely perceptible event happens, and you become a bit more aware of yourself and the things that occur around you.

Our contemporary methods of paving have completely lost the quality that contributes so much to walking in Venice. It may well be that smooth surfaces are necessary for automobiles and that cement sidewalks are cheaper to set and easier to shovel in the winter than brick ones. Only children understand what we miss. They are conscious of their newly attained ability to walk, skip, jump, hop, run. They invent games of not stepping on the cracks, or play hopscotch on the sidewalk. It is only when we are older that we take our legs and mobility for granted. This is the kind of detail that is so lacking in new environments, the level of experience that designers of cities need to remind us about.

Of course, a large part of the fascination of Venice—or conversely the dullness of modern cities—comes from what there is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to see around you. The site does not have to be spectacular. Aside from the buildings in the Piazza San Marco, some notable churches, and several palaces along the Grand Canal, there is little that is extraordinary in the Venetian townscape. Most of the city is concerned just with getting on with everyday life. These simple events, however, are placed in a special relationship to passenger, pedestrian and observer that makes them distinctive.

When a boat passes by and you are on a *vaporetto* or standing near the water, you can see the kinds of goods in the boat and often you can recognize the features on the driver's face. If there are two people on board, it is sometimes possible to catch a few phrases of their conversation and even to pass a friendly word or two. This seems so natural and correct that you have to remind yourself that we almost never have this degree of association in today's urban setting. It is such a profound change from previous experience that it is worth examining in detail to discover how this occurs in Venice and why it rarely happens elsewhere.

Such an event does not merely involve seeing things at a certain distance; an entire array of sensory perceptions is necessary. Central to this is the speed of movement, the distance to people and objects, the nearby noises, and the design of the boat itself. Often in narrow canals buildings are only eight or nine feet away; other times on the Grand Canal there is a separation of as much as a hundred feet. But since the boats travel no more than fifteen miles an hour, the period of passing, therefore watching, is extended. In addition, in most boats, including the *vaporetto,* it is possible to sit outside. Even in the cold, damp winter months many people, despite some apparent discomfort, do so to watch what goes by. From the open deck you have a wonderful vantage point. Sitting is not mandatory. You can stand up, walk around, lean over the side, and there are no posts or window mullions in the way. The engine noises are not obtrusive, and so the visual experience is reinforced by the sounds of the water and all the qualities of being outdoors. The result is an extraordinary unity of perception, a rare event in other cities, but common in Venice.

Under the right conditions we can sometimes approach this experience in a convertible automobile, but such cars are considered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unsafe and mainly for joyriding younger people, certainly not for families. There are a few open trolleys in San Francisco, and it is possible to stand outside on a platform at the back of a bus in Paris, but these are anomalies that are disappearing. In most buses, automobiles and airplanes you feel locked into your seat and your field of vision is minute. The heads in front, the roof and baggage rack above, and the sequence of window mullions on the sides reduce the view to almost nothing. The result is that there is almost no real contact for the rider between inside and outside. The pedestrian is similarly disassociated from moving vehicles and the scene around him. Even conversations between two people walking together are often drowned out by traffic noises.

It is not enough to say that these conditions are for the safety of the passenger. We actively pride ourselves on our ability to attain a "smooth ride," and it is considered an achievement if we can lock every external noise out of our automobiles. It seems that we are more concerned with attaining an illusory pinnacle of machine performance in our vehicles, than with what they give us access to. Our ideal is a transportation "capsule," a planet Earth equivalent of a space craft. Typically, even when we want to see what is around us, it has to be a special action, like sitting in a bubble dome of a sceni-cruiser bus, not part of a normal everyday process. Such a roof should be standard on all vehicles, and all vehicles should have operable windows so we can lean outside.

Seeing the activity of a city while in a moving vehicle has its advantages, but you should also be able to see it while you are on foot or standing still. In many cities, ancient and modern, there are special buildings—churches and skyscrapers, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Campanile in the Piazza San Marco in Venice—that you can climb, and, from the top, obtain a dramatic view of the scene below. Most often now you have to pay for an elevator ride, but you are rewarded by seeing in a completely objective way the environment of which you were just a part.

More rare, however, are places where separation exists and yet is not so complete. The crest of the Venetian foot bridges is just elevated enough so that you are both part of and observer to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

events below. Every day you walk up and down the arched foot bridges many times. On each occasion for a slight moment when you reach the top you can look back and take stock of where you have been and then see what is in store ahead. You can attain this extraordinary perspective without even stopping; but for those who want to tarry a little longer, the railing is wide enough to sit on safely, and often stone benches have been worked into the structure of the bridge. Normally walking up and down stairs would be a burden, but the bridges in Venice serve an important function besides that of joining the sides of the canals. They enable momentary resting periods, occasions for orientation, in the process of movement.

In no other city have I experienced the ability to be so completely a part of and apart from the crowd at the same time. Sometimes, if you are lucky enough to get the front seat on the top level of a London double-decker bus, you can almost feel the same sense of command and participation, but since the bus is moving, your control of the situation is greatly reduced. Pedestrian bridges over highways provide nothing similar. The speed and noise of cars is too threatening, and you feel too remote. They are purely for transit from one side to another.

From the Venetian bridges or just standing at the sides of the canals you can see a continuous procession of barges, gondolas, scows, tank boats, *vaporetti,* hand-driven boats, motor launches: in short, everything that moves on the water to service the city's facilities and transport its people. They carry everything imaginable: rubble from a construction site, cases of milk cartons, sides of meat for a butcher, a coffin to a funeral, huge spools of insulated wire, boxes of canned goods, racks of clothing, large containers of wine, a single piece of furniture for someone's home, a Xerox copier for an office.

These goods are unusually vivid in Venice; they are all open to view. The boats are rarely covered; if it rains, a canvas is thrown over the top. On the bridges or near the canal, you are actually standing above, but not too far above, the boats at water level. From this perspective, looking downward, most of the time you can see right into the hull and make a careful examination of its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contents, no matter whether the boat is at rest or moving. This is quite unlike our system of trucking: here you usually have to guess the contents from the words written on the side of the vehicle. In Venice the visibility of goods, seen out of their usual context in the course of movement, turns everyday things into fascinating objects. But, in addition, it also permits a degree of understanding, if only in a faintly perceptible way, about the processes continually at work around us. Because they are revealed in this way, things we use and take for granted are placed into a continuum of experience that extends beyond a single place or occasion.

This close contact does not only happen when goods are on board boats. Often a boat cannot deliver its contents directly to a building. It has to dock at a landing and its cargo is lifted onto a quay, called a *fondamenta*. The goods are then transported through the streets and brought straight to stores, offices and residences from the front. To do this the Venetians have invented, contrived and adapted an ingenious array of back-supported carriers, handcarts, dolly trucks, little wagons and push carts; some even are specially built to facilitate the climb over the stepped foot bridges. These conveyors are continually guided through the streets, but their constant coming and going do not conflict with pedestrians. Instead, the momentary encounter with a whole lamb, a cart full of plastic wastebaskets or a newly refinished eighteenth-century table is a never-ending source of interest: something well worth stepping aside for.

Only in the limited environments of airports (baggage carts, conveyor belts, lift trucks) and supermarkets (shopping carts, hand baskets, moving check-out counters) have we developed a workable system for the small-scale movement of goods. Without such secondary conveyors, which could service local areas from major drop-off points, our methods of servicing urban facilities produce, on the one hand, truck-choked streets and crowded sidewalks that generate intolerable commotion and noise, and require, on the other hand, service entrances and loading docks in the rear of buildings that leave the fronts lifeless, often merely ceremonial. In both cases this door-to-door, one-process servicing with trucks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

does the job, but it has disastrous consequences for the life of the spaces immediately adjacent to facilities.

Although there are now numerous small conveyors—some motorized, some not—for quite specific uses, it would take a remarkable change in state of mind to use them in a general servicing network that would restore some activity to open spaces and streets. The fact that so much happens in Venetian streets is not due to a desire to cultivate the picturesque, nor can it be explained as simply a result of expediency or efficiency. This openness is symptomatic of a general acceptance in Venice of each activity, and therefore the objects, equipment and people that it involves, as integral to the functioning of the life of the city. There is no attempt to hide anything. Instead, there is actually a demonstrative quality to the way goods are exhibited as they pass through the streets and canals.

But in the modern city there are certain activities that we would rather not see. Our image of an ideal urban setting does not include them, although they are necessary and vital parts of our lives. An architect, making a drawing or model to show what a place will be like in the future, would never include a garbage truck or a delivery vehicle in front of a building, and the representative people he draws are usually stereotypical nonentities. Such processes, their paraphernalia, and their people are as much a part of our environment and experience as buildings and vegetation, but somehow we would rather think they don't exist. As it turns out, the mental image becomes self-fulfilling. Goods are sneaked in and out of buildings at cleverly concealed loading docks, and outside spaces become single-purpose transit areas for getting from one place to another. The vitality of a city like Venice is lost, and with it a real sense of the processes that surround our lives.

The streets in Venice are not separated into sidewalks and vehicle areas, because there are no cars. You can walk parallel to the buildings or diagonally back and forth. The width of the street is never great, so you continually feel in contact with both sides. Stores, restaurants, and places of manufacture all spill out into the Venetian streets and use them as extensions of their establishments. In nice weather people eat in sidewalk cafes, foods

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and everyday goods are displayed outside, and often light industry employees and craftsmen use the available open area for work space.

No rigid separation of outside and inside, public and private, exists. Most often you can see what is happening on the ground floor of buildings as you pass by. Even though it is now commonplace to use huge sheets of plate glass in contemporary architecture, this is done mainly for its breathtaking effect, not so that passers-by may see in. Few modern buildings have the degree of openness and accessibility that is common in Venice. Sometimes Venetian stores have demountable fronts that are removed in the morning and then locked back into place in the evening. The "display window" is not so important. The store or restaurant, its equipment and goods, and the people inside constitute the display. Although there are places where certain people, rich and poor alike, would never enter, the concept of "exclusivity" and all the closed environments that it entails hardly exist.

You often pass small factories in Venice that make everything from motor boats to noodles. One such establishment produces all kinds of pasta and is located in a busy place near the main market. The building could have had either a closed or open wall, but, quite typically, it was possible to see completely inside. The various types of pasta were made with an intricate machine that required a considerable amount of skill on the part of the operators. This attracted the attention of passers-by, but not the kind of gawking that occurs when a shoemaker is placed on display at Christmas in the window of Macy's. The pasta factory was a going concern, a part of the life of the city, and its disposition was the natural one for it to have in relation to the street.

We rarely see such activities in modern cities. Either they have been removed to places where people no longer have everyday access to them, or it is considered desirable to make processes seem as if they happen by magic. We take shirts to a laundry to be cleaned and ironed. We hand them dirty and rumpled over a counter, and the next day we get them back neatly pressed, wrapped around a piece of cardboard, all in a box. In the experience of delivering your bundle or waiting to pick it up, there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is nothing to explain how this transformation takes place. The fronts of stores, and this is true of most offices and many homes as well, are figurative "fronts," facades that try to cover up what really happens inside.

In Venice so many events, however inconsequential they might seem on the surface, are absorbing in themselves. But the experience of the city as a whole is linked together by the fact that movement, whether on the water or in the streets, is uninterrupted. This condition establishes a kind of metabolism for Venice that is indispensable to its success. In Venice the boats that move on the canals actually proceed at a slow pace, but since there are no stop lights or traffic jams, they do not take long to get from one place to another. In addition, the continuous movement makes the trip satisfying because the driver feels that he is in control of the situation, and he is able to move his vehicle at something approaching its capacity. There is no need to blow horns, race engines, or beat out the boat that is next to you.

The same is true of walking. You can stroll through Venice at a leisurely pace or walk at a good clip. Your attention is not distracted or your gait interrupted by having to look out for traffic. You never have to wait at a corner for the light to change. Stopping is always your decision. In the circuitous alleys of Venice there rarely is a straight route between facilities or places, but this never seems like an inconvenience. Not only is there a lot to see in getting from one place to another, but the continuity of movement is more important than a little extra distance.

The disruption of continuous motion is one of the unique qualities of the modern environment. We take our disjointed movement so much for granted, that it is hard to imagine that this condition may never have occurred until relatively recently. The importance of this change has not been sufficiently emphasized. Automobiles have been criticized in many ways. We know that they no longer are a quick means of travel in the city—in New York the average automobile speed is about what it was in 1890 for the horse-drawn vehicle—and that they create all kinds of polluting side effects. But automobiles are also responsible for suspended moments, nonevents, in the lives of drivers, pedestrians and passen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gers. Waiting for lights to change or being stuck in a traffic jam has a debilitating effect that would be impossible to calculate, but certainly everyone has felt it. Ultimately the pressures and frustrations created by these moments may be more destructive than the more specific by-products of the automobile.

The automobile, however, is not unique in its disruption of continuous process. At a time when electronic communication is almost instantaneous, we are still subject to annoying and inconvenient delays, as we move through the environment. In the past when we entered a building there was a stair that we could immediately walk up. Now we often have to wait for an elevator. To cope with this unpleasant moment, an entire set of contrived manners, ways of responding to and ignoring people in crowded lobbies and elevators, has developed. It would be easy to blame this on the universal scapegoat, technology, but in fact escalators and moving sidewalks provide continuous movement. These devices, as well as doors that are activated by photoelectric cells at the touch of a foot, are marvelous inventions that enhance the experience of movement, but they have not been sufficiently exploited.

In Venice these interrupting moments almost never occur. The feeling of control through continuous movement is what ties the whole city together and creates a context for the sequence of experiences in the environment. The fact that such events rarely exist in modern cities may appear trivial to some, but in Venice the concern for this level of experience is what gives the city its urbanity. It makes you feel a part of the environment, not against it. Somehow you become more alive there.

In recent years there has been a good deal of concern throughout the world about the future of Venice. The lagoon is becoming more and more polluted, and eventually this not only may affect the stability of the foundations of many buildings, but it also may raise the level of the water and inundate at high tide the islands that make up the city. In addition, chemical particles in the air are eroding many statues and stone decorative work at an alarming rate. The emphasis of concern, then, has been on the preservation of the physical environment and artifacts of Venice.

But other circumstances may doom to failure efforts to save

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the city. The trading conditions that were responsible for Venice's growth and prosperity no longer exist, and the economic life of the city has suffered. Of course this process was first set in motion several centuries ago, but it has accelerated considerably since the Second World War. The sense of decay that writers about Venice have continually noted is very much in evidence. Once the source of well-being is cut off, it is unlikely that any city can be maintained, no matter what remedial measures are taken. Seeing the city preserved for tourists as an empty shell, like Pompeii, may be better than nothing in the future, but the significance of Venice comes from the life of the people who live there and use it. You can still witness the everyday functioning of the city, but this may not be possible much longer. In this event Venice could best be preserved by example—in whatever new forms or through whatever means—by transferring its urbane qualities to the cities we build in the future.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Evaluating College Professors by "Scientific" Methods

EVELYN KOSSOFF

ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES TODAY emphasis is being shifted from research to teaching. Students are clamoring for the undivided attention of their instructors. Financial backers of the educational system are demanding increased efficiency in communication of knowledge to larger and larger student audiences. "Let us turn from the search for new knowledge," they are saying, "to the problems of communicating our present store of knowledge to the population at large."

Whether or not college professors agree that abandonment of research is a necessary correlate of improvement in instruction, most are willing to admit that the search for better teaching methods is a worthy cause. The current attempts to evaluate college courses and instructors are, of course, essential preliminary steps toward improvement of instruction. I would like to raise a few questions, however, concerning the suitability and scientific validity of some of the procedures now being used for evaluation of college instructors. My criticism of the means—the methods of data collection—I hope will not be misinterpreted as objection to the goals: the ultimate improvement of teachers and teaching.

Not long ago I saw a questionnaire that is currently being submitted to students for evaluation of their instructors. This questionnaire (called the "evaluation instrument" or "evaluation mechanism" by its author) included items such as these: How clearly does the instructor indicate his objectives? How well does the instructor accomplish his objectives? To what extent does the instructor show a willingness to help you learn, aside from formal class time? How well does the instructor show a willingness to

✪ EVELYN KOSSOFF, who has taught English at the Universities of Maryland and Kentucky, is editorial consultant for the College of Dentistry at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

admit error? To what extent is the instructor fair and respectful in his dealings with you?

The student was asked to answer the questions by placing check marks in columns headed "Outstanding," "Superior," "Average," "Below Average," "Poor."

What disturbed me about this questionnaire was that the student was being asked to classify or measure without being given any frame of reference by which to determine the classifications or quantities he was being asked to supply. Presumably the column headings were intended to represent a five-point descending scale or a group of five classifications ranked from high to low. But how is the student supposed to distinguish what is or isn't clear, let alone what constitutes five units or four units of clearness? Which objectives fall into the highest order of classification or the lowest? How fair is "below average fair"? How much willingness to admit error is "superior well willingness"?

Putting myself in the student's place, I tried to imagine how I would decide where the check marks should go. I felt as if I had been asked to measure various objects to the nearest centimeter, although I had never seen a centimeter rule or even a conversion table relating centimeters to inches, units of measurement I could at least approximate. Or as if, at a zoo with unlabeled animal cages, I had been asked to identify the genus and species of each animal although I had never taken a zoology course and had no knowledge of the system of classification.

If I were a student who was asked, "How clearly does the instructor indicate his objectives?" I probably would try to remember whether or not the instructor ever had stated his objectives. Suppose the instructor had said, "The aim of this course is to give the student an understanding of the differences between normal and abnormal tissues in the human body." If I had never heard of "behavioral objectives," I might place this instructor at the upper end of the scale, giving him credit for having stated his objective explicitly, and for having expressed it in simple terms that I could understand—normal, abnormal, tissue, body. On the other hand, if I had read Robert Mager's *Preparing Instructional Objectives,* I would know that the word "understand" is taboo in formulating

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objectives, and I would give the instructor a low grade because he had not identified the "terminal behavior" expected of the student at the end of the course. The instructor would have to say something like, "The aim of this course is to see that the student passes his National Boards in pathology," before I could give him an "average" or "superior" grade.

Now, shifting my point of view from that of the student answering the questions to that of the data collector trying to evaluate the instructor, I can see that the absence of a definition of what constitutes a clear objective might introduce some difficulties in interpretation of the data. Two respondents to the questionnaire who had heard the same instructor make exactly the same statement could be grading the instructor at opposite ends of the scale! What kind of information are my data giving me? When I count up the check marks, I may know whether or not the students are reacting favorably to the instructor, but will I know anything about the instructor? Will I know what his objectives were, or whether they were clear or not? And if the majority of students are reacting unfavorably, what should the instructor do to improve his objectives—state them more behaviorally or less behaviorally?

I realize that nowadays statisticians have all sorts of elegant formulae for determining inter- and intra-rater reliabilities and for correcting errors that creep into statistical data, but is there a mathematical formula that can test the significance of answers to unanswerable questions? If I remember correctly, the little scientific training I had taught me that if one asks a meaningful question, one can get a meaningful answer, provided the research method is suitably designed to furnish an answer to the question asked.

Q.: How clearly does the instructor indicate his objectives?

A.: Of a total of 674 students, 59.23 percent reacted unfavorably to the instructor.

Is there something faulty about my logic, or is this answer a *non sequitur*? To be sure, the answer is statistical, but is it a scientific answer to a scientific question?

There are times when the modern education specialist reminds me of the ancient Pythagorean mystics who worshiped the divine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power of numbers. Tobias Dantzig, in *Number: The Language of Science,* quotes Philolaus, a disciple of Pythagoras, as saying, "All things which can be known have number; for it is not possible that without number anything can be either conceived or known." Some of our educational researchers seem equally convinced of the universality, reality and certainty of Numbers. Envious of the mathematical precision of the exact sciences, they seek to emulate these models. Their blind faith in the efficacy of numbers, however, seems to make them oblivious to the historical facts indicating that great scientific revelations have not always been mathematical.

There is no denying that for Einstein and Newton the formulation of physical laws in mathematical terms proved remarkably fruitful. But Darwin's theory of evolution, probably the most influential development in nineteenth-century thought, was propounded without reference to mathematics. Freud's discovery of the unconscious was the result of profound introspection and intuitive insight into clinical case histories; it was not arrived at statistically. As for Pasteur's notion that a tiny invisible creature could attack and destroy a healthy, full-grown human—that was a spatial, physical absurdity, but a feat of literary fantasy equal to Swift's Gulliver and the Lilliputians.

The roads to truth are many and varied; the path need not be paved with numbers and mathematical formulae. Why, then, do educational researchers insist on forcing qualitative traits into a quantitative mold? Why must questionnaires collect statistical rather than verbal data? Why construct a *quantified* profile of an instructor rather than a descriptive profile? A rating scale assumes a continuum divisible into discrete parts, but are all human qualities continuous or divisible? If a teacher collapses in front of a classroom, we could, I suppose, survey the five hundred students in the lecture hall to see if they believe he is "thoroughly dead," "moderately dead," "a little bit dead," or "slightly alive," but all we really need is the opinion of one doctor who can tell us whether to call for the ambulance or the mortician.

Some educational researchers apparently are well aware of the ineptness of the rating methods that have been used for research

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on teaching. The American Educational Research Association, with estimable candor, reported in 1953:

> . . . the present condition of research on teacher effectiveness holds little promise of yielding results commensurate with the needs of American education . . . after 40 years of research on teacher effectiveness . . . one can point to few outcomes that a superintendent of schools can safely employ in hiring a teacher or granting him tenure.

H. H. Remmers, who cites this passage in *Handbook of Research on Teaching* in 1963, assures his readers that the statement "still requires no amendment." One would think that fifty years of failure might have dimmed the educational researcher's ardor for mathematical methods. Nevertheless, the rating questionnaires continue to proliferate, and the masses of statistical data continue to grow and spread in wild profusion.

Let me cite another example of a widely circulated evaluation questionnaire now being used at some universities. This one lists the traits assumed to be indicative of "excellent teaching-learning" —for example, friendliness, helpfulness, interest in individual student, student-instructor mutual respect, humor, clarity of speech, freedom from annoyances, appearance, et cetera—and asks the student to rate the instructor as "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," "Poor" in relation to each trait. After the student has rated the instructor on twenty-eight separate items, he is asked for an overall appraisal of the instructor—again by check marks indicating "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," "Poor." Since the last page of the questionnaire contains a large blank space, the student is admonished: "Do not write in space below. You have been asked to use only check marks."

As I read through this questionnaire I could not help wondering what would have been the fate of some of my teachers if they had been evaluated by such a form. There flashed through my mind the picture of one professor who surely would have flunked out miserably.

She was a frowzy, middle-aged woman with wispy, drab-brown hair. She sat behind a long wooden table on a high platform overlooking her disciples with her narrow, piercing eyes. Above the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

table protruded a high, wide bosom clad in dark brown crepe on which rested a silver chain holding her reading spectacles. The hands that fidgeted with the papers and books that lay in front of her were covered with an ugly purple salve ill-concealed by stained white, loosely crocheted gloves. When she spoke, her voice came in sudden gasps, as if she were suffering from severe laryngitis. She wore a stern, humorless expression signaling unmistakably that she would brook no nonsense from flighty female undergraduates. Except for a fortunate few, who were mysteriously singled out as her favorites, she treated all students as ignoramuses. For the majority of us she was unapproachable, both inside and outside class.

During the first few weeks of the semester, this professor lectured to us from stale notes that undoubtedly had been prepared years before. We scribbled furiously in our notebooks to record every picayune detail she gave us on the life of Shakespeare, on Elizabethan theater, on quartos and folios and pirated manuscripts, on the finer nuances of Shakespearean scholarship that interested us not in the least.

About the third week of the course she began to read the plays to us. She read them word for word, line by line, stopping only now and then to explain an obsolete phrase or to interpret a difficult passage. She played all the parts—major and minor, male and female, hero and heroine. She was Hamlet, the Queen, the King; she was Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; she was Othello, she was his wife; she was King Lear and all three daughters; she played the witches, the fairies, the ghosts, the servants, the messenger boys.

The class was utterly transformed; the students were enraptured. With a voice that sounded like a strained loud whisper, this unprepossessing woman managed to give us powerful, passionate performances of the plays, with character interpretations that conveyed the full depth of meaning, breadth of vision, long-range perspective, and all-embracing human sympathies of the immortal bard. Rumor had it that this professor had been trained as a Shakespearean actress under a world-renowned director, but that cancer of the throat had dashed all her hopes of a brilliant acting career. We never doubted it for a moment. The physical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sounds she emitted could easily have emanated from a mechanical voice box; the portrayal of the characters could be produced only by someone who had the talents and imagination of an artist and who knew the techniques used by dramatic performers to divest themselves of their own personalities and to metamorphose into an infinite variety of human forms.

But what would have happened, I wonder, if this professor had been evaluated by a teaching appraisal form that specifies the requirements for teaching performance? Surely she would have been rated unfriendly, unhelpful, uninterested in students, humorless, lacking in clarity of speech, annoying, and unsuitable in appearance. I wonder if I, as a sophomore, would have had the good sense to ignore the instruction "Do not write in space below." And if I had written "THIS TEACHER READS SHAKESPEARE MAGNIFICENTLY! ALL OTHER CRITERIA ARE IRRELEVANT!" would the data collectors have heeded the comment or would they have dismissed it summarily because it could not be programmed into the computer along with the statistical data and the check marks?

I can hear people objecting: "Those were unusual circumstances. That teacher is the exception that proves the rule." To this argument I will answer: "All teachers are exceptional. By virtue of being human, they are bound to be highly individual."

Even the biologists are telling us nowadays that human protoplasm is unique for each human entity. Each person's genome is a singular combination of characteristics, unduplicated by any other organism. It rebels against the imposition of extrinsic matter that interferes with its integrity. And if the original genome is unique, how much more so the mental and emotional makeup that depends not only on the heritable characteristics of brain matter and nervous tissue but on the assorted vagaries of environmental happenstance that determine its development from embryo to adulthood.

We cannot escape this fundamental aspect of human nature, this essential attribute of uniqueness. When we formulate laws for inanimate objects, we can assume usually that the elements of similarity outweigh the differences—one grain of salt is like another, one ounce of iron ore will behave like another. In dealing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with humans we are confronted inevitably with the differences that defy generalization—we cannot always substitute one human being for another. We cannot assume that a drug will have the same effect on all human subjects; we can only calculate the probabilities. We cannot assume that the same environment will affect all humans the same way, that the same cause will produce the same effect, the same stimulus the same response.

Granted, there must be some levels of human reaction that can be predicted with reasonable accuracy, or we would have no medical sciences. Apparently there are even human reflex responses, corresponding to those of lower animals, that can be manipulated, conditioned, controlled. But when we are dealing with levels of human behavior as complex as teaching and learning, can we make generalizations that presuppose uniformity and ignore the individual differences multiplied to the *nth* degree?

Alfred North Whitehead once pointed out (in *Science and the Modern World*) that the "scientific mentality . . . instinctively holds that all things great and small are conceivable as exemplifications of general principles which reign throughout the natural order." The authors of evaluation questionnaires apparently assume that the order and uniformity that exist in the physical world are also characteristic of human phenomena. They assume that there must be "principles" of teaching, comparable to laws of nature, that can be identified and codified, and that all teachers must exemplify these general principles. But even in the natural sciences, there are pitfalls involved in the search for principles.

In *The Intelligent Man's Guide to the Biological Sciences* Isaac Asimov gives a striking illustration of one of the dangers inherent in the attempt to determine underlying laws from observed data: ". . . if brandy and water, whiskey and water, vodka and water, and rum and water are all intoxicating beverages, one may jump to the conclusion that the intoxicating factor must be the ingredient these drinks hold in common—namely, water." He then adds, "There is something wrong with this reasoning, but the fault in the logic is not immediately obvious, and in more subtle cases the error may be hard indeed to discover."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When I scan the lists of criteria in evaluation questionnaires, I sometimes wonder whether the traits thus far identified as common to effective instructors are not the watery elements in teaching rather than the essential intoxicating factors. Friendliness, helpfulness, fairness and good humor may be characteristics that many good teachers have in common, but what evidence is there that the presence of these traits will insure good teaching and that the absence of these traits is positive indication of ineffective teaching? Has anyone ever isolated a variable like "friendliness" from a total teaching situation and *proved* that amiability is a *sine qua non* for communication of a particular kind of subject matter? Has anyone devised a control that could demonstrate that teaching is impossible without "friendliness"?

The criteria used in questionnaires as indicators of teaching competence apparently are either hypotheses that cannot be tested or hypotheses that have been tested and have resulted in negative findings. A number of studies reported in the literature have compared teacher effectiveness rated in terms of behavior criteria with teacher effectiveness measured in terms of pupil learning. "A reading of these studies," say D. M. Medley and H. E. Mitzel, in *Handbook of Research on Teaching,* "reveals *uniformly negative results*" [italics mine]. These authors quote from the conclusions of eight studies, all of them indicating that no discernible relationships exist between rating criteria for teacher effectiveness and pupil achievement criteria.

Evidently the teaching principles on which evaluation questionnaires are based are not generalizations sufficiently supported by scientific evidence to be considered "laws of nature." As Remmers openly acknowledges, the content of rating scales is determined by the personal tastes, values, judgments of the originators, as well as by their educational philosophies—and admittedly, he says, there is "considerable divergence" in educational philosophies. The criteria for evaluation, then, are arbitrary standards selected by the evaluator to serve as the indicators of teaching competence. They are not "natural" or scientific laws; they are man-made laws—rules of conduct accepted by social custom or established by authority as the proper forms of teacher behavior.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perhaps there is nothing wrong with establishing rules of conduct for teachers, provided the rules are flexible. But we have had ample historical evidence of the consequences of attempts to *dictate* proper standards of belief and behavior to societies—more than sufficient evidence to make us wary of any attempts, well-meaning and allegedly scientific though they may be, to impose compulsory teaching principles on the grounds that they represent immutable laws of the universe.

I see no reason why evaluation of teachers must be based on assumptions of regularity and uniformity, or why it is necessary to assume that all teachers must comply with a fixed set of standards. There is an alternative aspect of nature, one very often neglected, that seems more realistically suited to the characterization of human phenomena. The "Order of Nature," Whitehead tells us, is an abstraction; it does not accurately portray the total concrete reality: ". . . in broad outline certain general states of nature recur . . . But there is a complementary fact which is equally true and equally obvious:—nothing ever really recurs in exact detail. No two days are identical, no two winters. . . . Men expect . . . the sun to rise, but the wind bloweth where it listeth."

In dealing with human phenomena, it may sometimes be important and useful to focus attention on the "broad recurrences," but at times the singular events and details may be of equal or greater significance. Depending on the problems at hand, we may want to note that all human faces have two eyes, two ears, a nose and a mouth, or we may want to emphasize that each face has a combination of distinctive features that unmistakably identifies a particular individual.

It is possible, I believe, to devise a system of evaluation based on concrete teachers rather than on abstract teaching traits. Instead of focusing attention on the search for similarities and generalities, we could concentrate on observing and analyzing the unique combination of teaching traits exhibited by individual teachers. We could evaluate each teacher's effectiveness in terms of the particular set of circumstances in which he operates—the particular students he is attempting to communicate with, the particular subject matter he is attempting to communicate. There is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no need to formulate artificial standards against which all teachers must be measured.

Max S. Marshall, a microbiologist and professor emeritus of the University of California Medical School, writing in the *Journal of Dental Education* in 1969, gives due recognition to the factor of human individuality when he suggests that what we need for evaluation of teachers and students are "adjustable standards." A rigid standard, he points out, can be seriously misleading: "A steel tape varies with temperature. To calibrate a tape at zero degrees, if it is to be used primarily in the tropics, would produce an exact and uniform error. It might well pass unnoticed, because the absolute standard has strong appeal." He goes on to say: "Consistency in measurement is not synonymous with accuracy, a fact which fools many persons . . . For real accuracy a special yardstick would have to be made for each person to whom measurement is applied, because each person presents his own set of conditions."

The idea of an individualized yardstick may sound eccentric from a scientific point of view, but it suggests methods of evaluation quite common in the field of aesthetics. A musician, for example, is not usually concerned with ranking Bach, Beethoven and Brahms in relation to an absolute standard of musical perfection. He finds it possible to evaluate and appreciate each composer in terms of his unique contributions. The art critic need not evaluate portraits painted by Picasso, Whistler and Rembrandt in terms of criteria for effectiveness common to all three. He finds it possible to examine each artist's work in terms of the artist's own goals, or to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an individual painting in terms of relations of parts to the whole. Perhaps we could learn something about teacher evaluation from observation of the methods of aesthetic criticism. Perhaps educational researchers should be observing each teaching situation *in toto* instead of attempting to isolate variables as if they were working with test tubes under controlled laboratory conditions.

The rating questionnaires that are based on a predetermined set of criteria not only fail to take into account human individuality and unpredictability; they also overlook a fundamental distinc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion between grading and evaluating. Maury Massler, Assistant Dean of the University of Illinois College of Dentistry, clarified the distinction with the following example: "If you have a basketful of eggs, you can grade easily, depending upon which criterion for grading you choose—weight, size, or color. None of these, however, tells you which egg you want for breakfast. Only after you eat it can you tell!"

The analogy has several important implications for evaluation: it suggests, first, that there may be invisible, intangible qualities, that are not so easily detected or so amenable to measurement as physical properties, but that are nevertheless relevant, or even essential, to evaluation. The efforts to systematize evaluation of instruction thus far seem to be concentrated on the outward, behavioral characteristics of teachers, perhaps because these are the most easily observed. But can we assume that microscopic and telescopic phenomena do not exist in teaching simply because these phenomena are more difficult to detect? We observe what a teacher *does* in the classroom, but has anyone ever observed the process of communication by which knowledge and mental skills are transferred from teacher to students? Teachers, like psychiatrists, have sometimes reported that they repeat an idea, or demonstrate the solution to a problem, over and over again before it registers in the student's brain. What happens during that moment of truth when the student's face lights up with understanding? What did the teacher say or do the twenty-first time that he failed to do the first twenty times? The subtler phenomena in teaching may be difficult to detect, measure or grade, but we cannot therefore assume that they are irrelevant to the evaluation process.

The egg analogy also suggests another problem involved in evaluation as opposed to grading. When we grade or measure an object, we are examining characteristics inherent in the object itself. We are merely the spectators, impartially observing objects external to ourselves that are uninfluenced by our observations. When we evaluate an object, we observe its inherent characteristics but in addition we introduce a new factor, value, a function of the observer rather than a quality of the thing observed. Value depends on the purpose and motives of the evaluator. It is a qual-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity the observer attributes to the object; it is not a physical characteristic of the object.

The observer may evaluate an object by selecting from a variety of characteristics the particular ones that he believes are relevant to his purpose. If the examiner is interested in an egg for breakfast, freshness is more important to him than color, size or weight. If he is selecting eggs for an Easter egg-rolling contest, their freshness is irrelevant; they need only be hard-boiled. If an observer measures the size of a table, he is not determining its value; a large table is not necessarily better than a small one. Its value may depend on the size of the room in which he plans to put it. Chemically speaking, the value of a human being is approximately $1.29 (or has human value increased with inflation?). For a mother, a wife, a child, a man's value is measured in different terms. When we attempt to evaluate teachers, we are not unbiased observers examining objects without purpose. A teacher's value may depend on whether he is being evaluated by a student, a colleague or an administrator; it may depend on the conscious or unconscious motives of the questioner who constructed the "evaluation instrument."

It is easy to overlook the subjective element involved in the evaluation process. The authors of evaluation forms, I am sure, think of themselves as objective observers impartially collecting data about teachers. Particularly when the data are computerized and expressed in mathematical terms, they create the illusion of "scientific objectivity." But the information assembled by evaluation questionnaires is predetermined by the investigator. He is choosing to examine a particular set of teaching traits and to ignore others. The process of selection itself represents a subjective bias.

It may not be possible to eliminate bias in the evaluation process. Evaluation, by definition, implies subjective values. But the least we can do is to call a spade a spade, and a student opinion poll a student opinion poll, not an "evaluation instrument." The term "instrument" connotes precision and accuracy, which may be possible when we are measuring a single, isolated, physical characteristic in terms of a fixed, predetermined standard. Evaluation, however, is a process of observing multiple factors, weighing and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

balancing them against each other, determining their importance in relation to the purpose and intentions of the observer. An evaluation is not a measurement; it is the end product of a series of complex and varied judgments.

By now I inadvertently may have convinced the reader that in my opinion teaching involves esoteric skills impervious to criticism and that all efforts to evaluate teachers are essentially futile. This was not my intention. I believe that evaluation is difficult, but possible and necessary. The attempts to gather factual information as a basis for evaluation, I believe, are admirable. What I object to are the pretensions of data collectors who claim to have found a precise, scientific means of determining evaluative judgments.

In the popular mentality of modern times, "scientific method" has come to be synonymous with "data collection." We seem to have forgotten that, even in the exact sciences, scientific method involves subjective human mental operations. Human beings identify problems and formulate hypotheses; they design experiments to test hypotheses; they observe, select and interpret facts; and they draw conclusions from facts. Data do not automatically solve problems; human beings, with the help of data, are capable of problem-solving.

In the April 7, 1967, *Science,* F. Peter Woodford, a scientist himself, complains about the thoughtlessness of many articles appearing in the scientific literature. "I am appalled," he says, "by the frequent publication of papers that describe most minutely what experiments were done, and how, but with no hint of why, and what they mean. Cast thy data upon the waters, the authors seem to think, and they will come back interpreted." The latest version of this motto, in some educational circles, seems to be: "Cast thy data into the computer, and it will cough up an evaluation."

As far as I know there is only one instrument capable of making evaluative judgments—the human brain. No computer, no mechanical robot, has yet been invented that is capable of performing the original critical and imaginative functions necessary for the formulation of scales of values and for judging human beings in terms of values. The human brain, to be sure, is limited

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and fallible, but it is the best, the only, instrument we have at present for performing this function. Would it not be better, then, to apply the human mind to the search for new techniques for analysis and solution of the knotty problems of evaluation than to abdicate responsibility by shifting the evaluative function to a questionnaire form that claims to provide instant, automatic evaluation?

All I ask is that we recognize that scientific method itself is a human invention, that it was initially designed to apply to material, tangible substance of the physical universe, and that it may require revision or variation when applied to some human phenomena. The physical sciences themselves underwent revision in the early twentieth century when the concepts of relativity and quantum theory provided a new basis for examination and explanation of physical phenomena. But in the social and behavioral sciences, it seems, there are still some who are tied to the mechanistic philosophies of the past that developed as an outgrowth of the application of Newtonian theory to the physical world. Is it not possible, as Mortimer Adler suggests, in *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes,* that man in some ways may differ fundamentally from all other forms of animate and inanimate nature? Perhaps we are now in need of new theoretical concepts in the social and behavioral sciences that will be appropriate for exploring exclusively human phenomena and for determining proper guide lines for control of human nature and behavior.

Only human thought can provide answers to the problems of evaluation. Human beings—not questionnaires, not evaluation instruments, not computers—produce evaluations. I have no objections to evaluation of teachers by human observers. Criticism of humans by humans I consider fair play. I object only to evaluation of humans by "instruments" and "mechanisms" to which are attributed superhuman powers of perception, precision and perspicacity. I ask only that we acknowledge the limitations of all forms of human judgment, and that we leave all final evaluations for the Almighty Evaluator, Who alone knows all the facts and understands all the motives relevant and requisite to the pronouncement of final judgment on all human beings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fresh Air

DANIEL J. LANGTON

This is the day I meet my love
And take her candy walking,
This is the day I take my love,
With a minimum of talking.

We'll walk in the lamp-lit streets of cheer,
Among the staring children,
And I'll whisper in my young love's ear,
My heart is a flaming cauldron.

We'll have a drink near the city shore,
Till my young love's heart has lightened.
When I rise to leave, she'll ask for more,
For my young love will be frightened.

I'll lift her gently from her chair
And she'll do as she is bidden,
For beneath the breasts of my lady fair
A steaming heart is hidden.

We'll walk to the house in which she lives,
With its paint like chocolate pudding,
And when I take and my lady gives,
She'll be done with maidenhooding.

And now I must leave you, as you see,
On the steps of her darkened home.
For two things a man needs privacy,
And one is to make a poem.

✪ DANIEL J. LANGTON's poems have been published in *Poetry, Atlantic* and the *Paris Review*. Mr. Langton teaches at San Francisco State College.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On Trying to Understand Scientific Genius

GERALD HOLTON

Introduction. Historians of science return again and again to the epochal contributions of the Newtons and Niels Bohrs, the Darwins and Freuds. Although the history of science is not primarily the study of the work of "genius," historians cannot avoid encountering at every turn the primary or secondary effects of certain few extraordinary, transforming works. At the same time, men and women at that level of achievement are the most puzzling ones.

What is meant by genius in science? What are its characteristics? Can one understand it, or is that a contradiction in terms? I am not speaking merely of "creative" people, nor of men of "high attainment." I am aware of the large amount of literature on creativity, and of some fine studies of men of genius in the arts or in political affairs. But I do not find them very helpful for understanding the life or the work of a Fermi or an Einstein, and even less for discerning how his personality and his scientific achievements interact.

Einstein himself pointed to one difficulty with such a study: it may be hard to find commonalities among many cases from which to gain more understanding about a specific case. He wrote in an essay in 1918, which we shall have occasion to study further, that the small group of genial scientists who have found special favor with the Angel of the Lord "are mostly rather odd, uncommunicative, solitary fellows who, despite these common characteristics, resemble one another really less than the host of the banished." Leopold Infeld, who worked for many years closely with Einstein, dismissed entirely the possibility of giving a definition of genius for, he wrote, "it is characterized just by the fact that it escapes classification."[1]

Yet I do not think the matter is altogether hopeless. On the contrary, it is precisely the attempt to seek some clues through the study of scientific publications, letters, and biographies of such a scientist that has given me the ambitious topic. But I should warn at the outset that we shall be left with many questions, some problems that look interesting, a few hypotheses, and no permanent answers. Moreover, I shall discuss here only one person, and what I have to say may or may not be applicable to other scientists.

The first temptation is to proceed reductionistically, and to analyze the man of genius into externally visible, singular

✪ GERALD HOLTON is professor of physics at Harvard University, and also an associate member of its history of science department. An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the Cooper Union School of Art and Architecture. Professor Dore Ashton, head of the department of art/architecture history there, writes: "Most of us here believe that the arts do not exist in a vacuum. Three years ago we initiated CRITIQUES, a lecture series with specifically centrifugal intentions. In order to deepen our own speculations, and those of the community, we invited participants from many fields who have indicated that they have been moved by art and have meditated on the reasons for being moved. In doing so, they have, like Professor Holton, brought illumination from unusual sources, furthering in the most natural way the dialogue so often declared necessary, and so rarely attempted."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

elements of his work and character. Those of us who have worked with such a person will have caught glimpses of such elements. The first is undoubtedly his insight into the phenomena of science in a way that amounts almost to a special perception of a kind that can hardly be communicated to others, or a tactile coexistence with natural phenomena: sometimes the mind seems to move into the problem of nature as if it were a hand slipping into a glove. Another element may be his clarity of thought as shown by the penetration of his questions, and by the simplicity and ingenuity of his *Gedankenexperimente*—experiments carried out in thought in just the idealized milieu that turns out to be needed.

Third, one may be startled by the intensity and wide scope of his alertness, for example, to small signals in the large "noise" of any experimental situation or of its description. One is likely also to be constantly impressed by his extraordinary energy and persistent dedication—in manipulation of equipment, in the making of apparatus or tools, in computing or writing. There is a marvelous overabundance evident in such a person, in a Kepler or a Gauss no less than in a Mozart. Connected with it is surely the ability to lend himself—no, to give his whole life over—to the development of a field or an area of thought, usually to the near exclusion of satisfactions or drives other men find irresistible.

And lastly, one is likely to perceive an aura or atmosphere surrounding such a person's actions and expressions, which sets him apart in a way difficult to define. It is not merely the sometimes unreasonable degree of optimism about his own mission, the self-confidence and self-reliance that appear to others at times to be egocentric obstinacy. Rather, I speak of a basic feeling that such a man has, and that may be shared by those who know him well: that he is, in some sense, one of the "chosen" ones.

These and other characteristics may be more or less adequate earmarks of genius in a particular case. They do apply to Einstein, for example. But I have no illusion that such a list of singularities explains everything. Quite apart from the question of whether any reductionistic approach of this kind can succeed, each of the elements themselves, except possibly the last one, seems to be continuous to second- and third-raters. Moreover, these elements do not appear to be either exhaustive or to have convincing and necessary connections, nor does each of them seem necessary.

If we now ascend to the next more serious level, one may well be expected to turn to the methods of psychoanalysis or psychohistory. Some successful and beautiful studies of men not in the sciences exist, although Frank Manuel has given us the one example of such a study of a physical scientist, in *A Portrait of Newton*. At least for the particular case I wish to discuss here, psychobiographical analysis will, in my opinion, be most fruitful when used in conjunction with all the other tools of the historian of science, rather than being made the central method. While the personality and work of the genius appear to me to be qualitatively different from those of other scientists, I am not prepared, at least not yet, to think that our methodology and techniques of study must be significantly different from those used in more ordinary cases. Indeed, the most promising road seems to me this: first to identify some special puzzle or problem characterizing our understanding of the man of genius, and then to bring the whole range of the historian's professional tools to bear on this particular puzzle—with the hope that the special character of genius may be reflected in the special aspects of the solutions.

A Puzzle of Polarities. For some time I have been working on the historical origins of special relativity theory. In retrospect, I find that the most haunting questions have not been those of the sort one usually encounters in the work of most other scientists—such as the trajectory of conceptual development, fascinating though this is. Rather, there is what first strikes one as a remarkable set of puzzling po-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

larities, or, if you will, symmetries and asymmetries, in Einstein's style and life's work.

Let us make a brief list of some of these apparent polarities among which we shall presently choose one for detailed attention.

The folkloric image itself is that of the wisest of old men, who even looked as if he had witnessed the Creation itself; but at the same time, he seems also an almost childlike person. Einstein himself once said, in a remark that will take on some significance later, that he was brought to the formulation of relativity theory in good part because he kept asking himself questions concerning space and time that only children wonder about.

Then there is his legendary, iron ability to concentrate, often for years, on a single basic problem in physics, regardless of contemporary schools and fashions. Similarly, there is his stubborn faithfulness to a clearly established personal identity, characterized by uncompromising rejection of every *Zwang* and external, arbitrary authority, in physics as well as in clothing or in the demands of everyday life. But opposite to this glorious obstinacy and solitary intransigence with which to search for the basic permanence and necessity behind nature's phenomena, there is also his ever-ready openness to deal after all with the "merely personal" from which he so longed to flee—to deal with the barrage of requests for help and personal involvements that appealed to his fundamental humanity and his vulnerability to pity.

Closely related is another opposition (to express it from the viewpoint of the external observer, in the only language easily available to us, but a language that may well mislead rather than reveal). Einstein is of course known as a grand public personage, radiant and lively, with profound wit and charisma. But from early childhood to his late years he was at the same time also characteristically a solitary person. M. Talmey, who observed him often between his eleventh and fifteenth years, wrote later that he had never seen him in the company of schoolmates or other boys of his age, but that he was usually aloof, absorbed in books and music. In 1936 Einstein wrote in a short "self-portrait": "I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity." Einstein could oscillate between these states of the public and private person.[2] He once confessed: "My passionate sense of social justice and social responsibility has always contrasted oddly with my pronounced lack of need for direct contact with other human beings and human communities."

Then there is Einstein as the apostle of rationality, whose thought was characterized by an exemplary clarity of logical construction. On the other hand, there is the uncompromising belief in his own aesthetic sense in science, his warning not to look in vain for "logical bridges" from experience to theory, but to make, when necessary, the great "leap" to basic principles. As he wrote in a well-known passage, "To these elementary laws there leads no logical path, but only intuition, supported by being sympathetically in touch with experience [*Einfühlung in die Erfahrung*]."[3]

Then, on the one hand we have his well-known personal philosophy of liberal agnosticism, even a withering contempt for established religious authority of any sort; and on the other hand there is also a clear personal religiosity. As he says in one of his letters, "I am a deeply religious unbeliever."

Elsewhere[4] I have discussed yet another apparent conflict, that between Einstein as a scientific revolutionary and Einstein as a conservative who stressed the continuity of physics—as in his remark quoted by Carl Seelig: "With respect to the theory of relativity it is not at all a question of a revolutionary act, but of a natural development of a line which can be pursued through centuries."[5]

The Field and the Quantum. It is surely significant that these personal "odd contrasts" have their counterparts in polarities that run right through his scientific work. The most striking of these is the well-known dichotomy between Einstein's devotion to the thema of the *continuum*—expressed most eminently in the field con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cept—as the basis for fundamental, scientific explanation, and, on the other side, his role in developing quantum physics in which the key idea is *atomistic discreteness.* This merits some amplification.

His devotion to the continuum was not exceeded by that to any other thema, except possibly of symmetry and invariance (that is, of "relativity" itself). It held to the very end; a paper published the year before his death is on "Algebraic Properties of the Field in the Relativistic Theory of the Asymmetric Field." In his letters, even more strongly than in his articles, we find him incessantly defending the continuum against attacks on it by the quantum physicists. He once called the classical concept of the field the greatest contribution to the scientific spirit, and it is significant that in the first paragraph of his fundamental 1905 paper on relativity theory, Einstein motivates the whole discussion by describing the old, seemingly trivial, experiment of a current induced in a conductor that moves with respect to a magnetic field.

The field played a crucial role in his imagination even earlier. From his Autobiographical Notes and other testimony we know that his successful formulation of universal principles on which to reconstruct physics in 1905 depended on his fully understanding at last the solution to a paradox on which he had reflected for ten years, since the day it had occurred to him as a sixteen-year-old student at the Kanton Schule of Aarau in 1895-96.[6] We shall later find that it was probably not by accident that this key perception happened at Aarau.

He later described the paradox as it appeared to him in a vivid thought experiment: "If I pursue a beam of light with the velocity c (velocity of light in a vacuum), I should observe such a beam of light as a spatially oscillating electromagnetic field at rest. [For example, looking back along the beam over the space of one whole wavelength, one should see that the local magnitudes of the electric and magnetic field vectors increase point by point from, say, zero to full strength, and then decrease again to zero, one wavelength away.] However, there seems to be no such thing, whether on the basis of experience or according to Maxwell's equations." Only by postulating the principles of relativity was the surprising expectation shown to be in error and the physics of the field rescued from this absurdity.

But the field held Einstein enthralled even earlier, as shown in a youthful essay which J. Pelseneer discovered in Belgium not long ago.[7] Its title is nothing less than "On the Examination of the State of the Ether in the Magnetic Field" *(Über die Untersuchung des Aetherzustandes im magnetischen Felde).* It is a suggestive piece, for it shows that Einstein had already encountered Hertz's work on the electromagnetic field, and that he was thinking up experiments to probe the state of the ether which, he said, "forms a magnetic field" around electric current. For this purpose he suggested sending a light-beam into the magnetic field as a probe. Any effects on the measurable speed or wavelengths of such a beam would reveal the "elastic deformation" of the ether or field.

It would be an error to think of that essay in any way as a draft of ideas on which the later relativity theory was directly based, or even to regard it necessarily as his first scientific work. But what is most significant about it is the idea of the lightbeam as a probe of a field. From the contemplation of how to measure the wavelengths of such a beam, it would be only a small step to the recognition of the paradox Einstein discovered soon afterwards at the Aarau school.

We can go back even further when searching for the point where the thematic commitment to the continuum was formed. It is well known that, as a child of four or five, Einstein experienced what he called "a wonder" when his father showed him a simple magnetic pocket compass. It was an experience to which Einstein often referred. His friend Moszkowski reported him in 1922 to have said, "Young as I was, the remembrance of this occurrence never left me." His biographer Seelig wrote in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1954 that the compass "to this day is vividly engraved in his memory, because it practically bewitched him." Another (although less reliable) biographer reported that Einstein told him of that early part of his life: "The compass, and only the compass, remains in my memory to this day." In his Autobiography, written at the age of sixty-seven, we read: "I can still remember—or at least I believe I can remember—that this experience made a deep and lasting impression on me. Something deeply hidden had to be behind things."

The scene is most suggestive: There is the mysterious invariance or constancy of the compass needle, ever returning to the same direction, despite the fact that the needle seems free from any action-by-contact of the kind that is usually and unconsciously invoked to explain the behavior of material things; despite the vagaries of motion one may arbitrarily impose on the case of the compass from the outside; and regardless of personal will or external *Zwang* or chaos. If Einstein remembered it so well and referred to it so often, it may be because the episode is an allegory of the formation of the playground of his basic imagination.[8] For anyone interested in the genesis of scientific ideas or the motivation toward scientific study, these sketchy remarks will indicate that there are here problems that cry out to be worked on: These are, however, not our chief concerns here. What does matter is that this long loyalty to the explanatory power of the continuum was destined to be put to a severe test.

For Einstein, of course, was also the brilliant contributor to the physics based on the thema precisely the polar opposite to the continuum, namely, the discrete quantum—for example, in the conception that light energy is not continuously divisible, but proceeds in well-defined quanta or photons. By his own report Einstein came to quantum physics by studying what Planck's radiation formula may imply for the "structure of radiation and more generally . . . the electromagnetic foundations of physics." Einstein's first fundamental paper in quantum physics, entitled "On a Heuristic Point of View Concerning the Generation and Transformation of Light," was finished at Bern in 1905, three days after he had turned twenty-six, and only about three months before the relativity paper.

The wonder is that it is so completely different (in all ways but one) from the relativity paper. That is, its object is close to what Einstein later called "mental gymnastics": to overcome a problem in physics at any cost, but without a basic reformulation. As its title says, it is dominated by a heuristic attitude. On the other hand, the relativity paper is Natural Philosophy in the deepest sense: rejecting everything arbitrary, even assumptions concerning the nature of matter, in order to find the nature of space and time that allows causal continuity and prepares for the great simplications and unifications, first of all, that of the transformation properties of mechanics and electrodynamics.

But while the relativity theory became Einstein's own most enduring life preoccupation, he could not accept quantum physics seriously. To Leopold Infeld, he said "I may have started it, but I always regarded these ideas as temporary. I never thought that others would take them so much more seriously than I did." Yet, he continued to make some of the most seminal contributions to it for a quarter of a century from 1905 on, with rarely a year going by in which he did not publish an article on this subject.

These, then, are some of the characteristics that seem to be polar opposites. It is, I think, significant that Einstein himself drew attention to the existence of such polar pairs in the work and personality of outstanding scientists—and precisely in the one essay in which he came closest to asking the question raised here: wherein lies scientific genius? He was, of course, not referring to himself. His essay, entitled *"Motiv des Forschens,"* was delivered in 1918 as an offering in honor of his early mentor, friend and colleague, Max Planck. Because it illuminates strikingly the questions at hand (and, by the way, could still serve as a manifesto for many a scholar), a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

condensation of Einstein's essay has been attached to this paper as an appendix. It will be noted that Einstein contrasts the "positive" and "negative" motives for doing research at that highest level, and the opposing demands of clarity and completeness, of logic and intuition, of private and public science.

If we now take it as granted that striking polarities exist, of both personality and work, in this one case,[9] we must ask next: Are they important or accidental? Earlier, we disavowed the idea that a plausible list of individual characteristics adds up to an explanation or even a characterization of genial scientists. If such singularities were not significant, why should polarities be? What special abilities do they convey to their possessor? Does a man of genius bring to bear upon his work the harmonies and disharmonies, the strengths and conflicts within his person—and the pressures and conflicts of his environment? Regardless of how a man like Einstein came to have his particular characteristics (that may in any case not be a very interesting question in the present state of such research), we can ask whether there was some special way in which he *put to use* these dichotomies and conflicting polarities.

We are encouraged to expect a positive reply to such questions if we notice the existence and brilliant exploitation of polarities in Einstein's *individual contributions*. The most evident example is the presence and use of contrast in the original relativity theory paper itself: we find there both the positivism of the instrumentalist and operationist variety, which Einstein uses in defining the concepts, and, on the other hand, the rational realism inherent in the *a priori* declaration of the two basic principles of relativity (moreover, two apparently contradictory ones, introduced seemingly in arrogant disregard both of current scientific sensibilities and of the contemporary demand to base them plausibly on scientific experiments). Einstein himself acknowledged this ambivalence. In response to the charge[10] "Einstein's position . . . contains features of rationalism and extreme empiricism. . . ," he replied, "This remark is entirely correct. . . . A wavering between these extremes appears to me unavoidable."

A similarly creative use of apparent opposites can be found in Einstein's contribution to quantum physics, centering on the wave-particle duality. It really is the hallmark of Einstein's most famous contributions that he could deal with, use, illuminate, transform the existence of apparent contradictories or opposites, sometimes in concepts that had not yet been widely perceived to have polar character. One need only think of his bridging of mechanics and electrodynamics, energy and mass, space coordinates and time coordinates, inertial mass and gravitational mass.

The Significance of Asymmetry. We can now choose for detailed study a concrete example by means of which to find further hints on how personal characteristics interacted with scientific work. The example offers itself in fact at the very beginning of the basic 1905 paper on relativity theory. The title is "On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies," and neither there nor later on is the phrase "relativity theory" used. None of Einstein's papers has this phrase in the title until 1911, long after others began to refer to his work in that way. Indeed, it is of the essence to know that for the first two years Einstein, in his letters, preferred to call his theory not "relativity theory," but exactly the opposite: *"Invarianten Theorie."* It is unfortunate that this splendid, accurate term did not come into current usage, for it might well have prevented the abuse of relativity theory in many fields.

In the very first sentence of the paper, there is a term that attracts our attention, especially now that we have become sensitized to it by the previous discussion on polarities. The sentence is an Eroica-like opening: "It is known that Maxwell's electrodynamics—as usually understood at the present time—when applied to moving bodies, leads to asymmetries which do not appear to be inherent in the phenomena."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is not Maxwell's electrodynamics that is at fault; it is the way it is usually understood: a bold, not to say aggressive, statement from this relatively unknown young patent office employee. And this usual way of understanding has led to—what? An experimental puzzle? No. A theoretical impasse? No. It leads to asymmetries that do not appear to be inherent in the phenomena.

For example, you may think of inducing a current in a conductor—as Einstein immediately does in the style of a little thought-experiment. To calculate what current to expect when the conductor is moving with respect to a stationary magnet, you must use one kind of equation. When you calculate again on the assumption that now you will keep the conductor stationary and let the magnet move, you must use a different kind of equation—although the current actually produced is found to be identical in both cases, as has been known ever since Faraday first described the effect in 1831. The phenomenon is characterized by symmetry; but the machinery for calculation was characterized by polarity or asymmetry (until Einstein showed, later in the paper, how to "relativize" the problem so that the same equation may be used for both cases).

"Asymmetry" was surely a curious term for Einstein to use for this apparent redundancy or lack of universality. Moreover, such terms as symmetry or asymmetry still referred at that time largely to aesthetic judgments, often thought to be the polar opposites of scientific judgments. In physics literature, symmetry arguments were quite uncommon (although they are easier to find now in retrospect); the term itself was rarely used except in such branches as crystal physics. For example, the word symmetry is mentioned only casually in Mach's *Science of Mechanics* (although the concept is used implicitly in discussions involving the Principle of Sufficient Reason, in a form traced by Mach to Schopenhauer). As late as 1929, the eleventh edition of the large encyclopedia of physics of Müller-Pouillet indexes only a single noncasual use of the symmetry concept outside crystal physics—and that is, naturally, the entry for symmetrical tensors, and refers to Einstein's General Relativity Theory itself. There is no entry for symmetry or asymmetry in the *Sachregister* of the encyclopedic volume *Physik* (E. Warburg, ed., B. G. Teubner, Leipzig, 1915). Nor for that matter is there any such entry in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910).

Only with the growth of the role of quantum mechanics, and more recently of elementary particle physics, has it become clear that the conservation laws of physics are closely connected with the concept of symmetry of space and time, as had been implicit in the Lagrangian and Hamiltonian methods of solving physical problems. And it is only with the help of hindsight that we have come to see, as H. Weyl[11] points out, that "the entire theory of relativity . . . is but another aspect of symmetry," in the sense that "the symmetry, relativity, or homogeneity of this four-dimensional medium [the space-time-continuum] was first correctly described by Einstein. . . . It is the inherent symmetry of the four-dimensional continuum of space and time that relativity deals with."

But all this was far in the future in 1905. In any case, Einstein's reference to asymmetry at the start of his paper was not a symmetry consideration of the same kind as those just mentioned. Few physicists, if any, can have thought in 1905 that there was something of fundamental importance in the asymmetry to which Einstein pointed.

And if one considers how many troubles there were in electrodynamics at the time, it must have seemed peculiar indeed to seek out this quasi-aesthetic discomfort, and to put it at the head. What Einstein's perception of asymmetry at this point *does* show us, however, is his remarkable and original sensitivity to polarities and symmetry properties of nature that later became recognized as important in relativity theory and in contemporary physics generally.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From everything we now know about Einstein, we have also been prepared to understand that his desire to remove an unnecessary asymmetry was not frivolous or accidental, but deep and important. At stake is nothing less than finding the most economical, simple, formal principles, the barest bones of nature's frame, cleansed of everything that is *ad hoc,* redundant, unnecessary.[12] To his assistant, Ernst Straus, Einstein said later: "What really interests me is whether God had any choice in the creation of the world." In fact, sensitivity to previously unperceived formal asymmetries or incongruities of a predominantly aesthetic nature (rather than, for example, a puzzle posed by unexplained experimental facts)—that is the way each of Einstein's three otherwise very different great papers of 1905 begin. In all these cases the asymmetries are removed by showing them to be unnecessary, the result of too specialized a point of view. Complexities that do not appear to be inherent in the phenomena should be cast out. Nature does not need them.

And Einstein does not need them. In his own personal life, the legendary simplicity of the man is an integral part of this reaching for the barest minimum on which the world rests. I will not need to recall here the many stories about this simplicity. Even people who knew nothing else about Einstein knew that he preferred the simplest possible clothing. We noted that he hated nothing more than artificial restraints of any kind. He once was asked why he persisted in using ordinary handsoap for shaving, instead of shaving cream, despite the fact that it was clearly less comfortable for him to shave that way. He said, in effect: "Two soaps? That is too complicated!"

Two equations? That is too complicated. Nature does not work this way, and Einstein does not work this way. The overlap between the two was once expressed by Einstein in a humble sentence: "I am a little piece of nature." We have here an important clue to our question of what may be meant by the easy term "genius": *there is a mutual mapping of the mind and life-style of this scientist, and of the laws of nature.*

At the same time, the desire to remove an unwarranted "asymmetry" contains a clue to a second connection between Einstein's work and his person. The area that seems worth exploring lies where two studies meet: one is the well-known use of symmetry and asymmetry arguments in mathematics, particularly geometry, and the other is the investigation of mathematical and other thought processes in children by W. Köhler, M. Wertheimer, and others of that school.

"What, precisely, is 'thinking'?" We know far too little about Einstein as a child, but he is commonly reported to have been withdrawn, slow to respond, quietly sitting by himself at an early age, playing by putting together shapes cut out with a jigsaw, erecting complicated constructions by means of a chest of toy building parts. Before he was ten, he was making, with infinite patience, fantastic card houses that had as many as fourteen floors. He is said to have been unable or unwilling to talk until the age of three. Many pediatricians and psychologists might consider such evidence to indicate an almost backward child.

But it is coming to be more widely agreed that an apparent defect in a particular person may merely indicate an imbalance of our normal expectations. A noted deficiency should alert us to look for a proficiency of a different kind in the exceptional person. The late use of language in childhood, the difficulty in learning foreign languages—one remembers that Einstein failed in foreign languages at the *Gymnasium* and again at the entrance examination in Zurich (one of the reasons for his having to go to the Kanton Schule in Aarau), that his vocabulary in English was fairly small—all this may indicate a polarization or displacement in some of the skill from the verbal to another area. That other, enhanced area is without doubt, in Einstein's case, an extraordinary kind of visual imagery that penetrates his very thought processes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Although it seems to have been hardly noted so far, Einstein himself plainly signals this point early in his Autobiographical Notes. He asks, rather abruptly:

> What, precisely, is "thinking"? When at the reception of sense-impressions, memory-pictures [*Erinnerungsbilder*] emerge, this is not yet "thinking." And when such pictures form series, each member of which calls forth another, this too is not yet "thinking." When, however, a certain picture [*Bild*] turns up in many such series, then—precisely through such return—it becomes an ordering element for such series, in that it connects series which in themselves are unconnected. Such an element becomes an instrument, a concept . . . It is by no means necessary that a concept must be connected with a sensorily cognizable and reproducible sign (word). . . . All our thinking is of this nature of a free play [*eines freien Spiels*] with concepts. . . . For me it is not dubious that our thinking goes on for the most part without use of signs (words), and beyond that to a considerable degree unconsciously.

It is not accidental at all that this surprising passage comes just before Einstein tells of the two "wonders" experienced in childhood. One of these was the experience with the compass that we have mentioned. The other wonder, of a totally different nature, was the little book dealing with Euclidean plane geometry which, he recalled, was given to him at about the age of twelve. In this connection, Einstein described an early, successful use of his particular way of "thinking" in visual terms:

> I remember that an uncle told me the Pythagorean theorem before the holy geometry booklet had come into my hands. After much effort I succeeded in "proving" this theorem on the basis of the similarity of triangles; in doing so it seemed to me "evident" that the relations of the sides of the right-angled triangle would have to be completely determined by one of the acute angles. Only something which did not in similar fashion seem to me "evident" appeared to me to be in need of any proof at all. Also, *the objects with which geometry deals seemed to be of no different type than the objects of sensory perception "which can be seen and touched."* (Italics supplied)

The objects of the imagination were to him evidently persuasively real, visual materials, which he voluntarily and playfully could reproduce and combine, analogous perhaps to the play with shapes in a jigsaw puzzle. The key words are *Bild* and *Spiel;* and once alerted to them, one finds them with surprising frequency in Einstein's writings. Thus, responding to Jacques Hadamard, Einstein speaks clearly about the point made above:[13]

> The words or the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be "voluntarily" reproduced and combined . . . But taken from a psychological viewpoint, this combinatory play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought—before there is any connection with logical construction in words or other kinds of signs which can be communicated to others. The above-mentioned elements are, in my case, of visual and some of muscular type.[14] Conventional words or other signs have to be sought for laboriously only in a secondary stage, when the mentioned associative play is sufficiently established and can be reproduced at will.

Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of Gestalt psychology and a friend of Einstein, reports[15] that from 1916 on, in numerous discussions, he had questioned Einstein "in great detail about the concrete events in his thoughts" leading to the theory of relativity. Einstein told him, "These thoughts did not come in any verbal formulation. I very rarely think in words at all. A thought comes, and I may try to express it in words afterwards"; and later: "During all those years there was a feeling of direction, of going straight toward something concrete. It is, of course, very hard to express that feeling in words . . . But I have it in a kind of survey, in a way visually."

In Einstein's published work, his visual imagination sometimes breaks through vividly. One thinks here, for example, of passages where he describes thought experiments involving the picturesque tasks of coodinating watch readings, the arrival of light signals, the positions of locomotives

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and those of lightning bolts. Possibly Einstein's ability to deal with models and drawings in the patent office, and his own delight with the workings of puzzle-toys, are additional clues of some significance. More important for our purposes, this ability of visualization is evident in the haunting thought experiment of the light-beam, begun at Aarau, and even in the thought experiment proposed in his earlier essay of 1894-5, where he envisages probing the state of the ether in the vicinity of a current-carrying wire.

I have little doubt that the ability to make such clear visualizations of experimental situations was crucial in his task of penetrating to the relativity theory (for example, in the argument leading to the relativity of simultaneity). It is so to this day. As anyone who has tried to instruct students in relativity theory knows, the problem of getting a firm initial understanding of special relativity is not one of mathematics—at most, elementary calculus is required—but rather one of clear *Vorstellung*.[16] What helps a beginner most is precisely the ability to imagine vividly some thought experiments involving the perceptions and reports of two observers who are moving relative to each other. The style of thinking necessary at the outset is quite different from working, for example, through the machinery of a formalism such as characterizes the work of a Sommerfeld.

But in the long run, the strength of Einstein's visual imagination was not limited only to such uses. Rather, the hypothesis here proposed is that the special ability to think with the aid of a play with visual forms has deeper consequences. It animates the consideration of symmetries and a corresponding distaste for extraneous complexities from the beginning to the end —from the result embedded in his 1905 paper that the Lorentz transformation equations yield "contractions" and "time dilations" that are, for the first time, symmetrical for all inertial systems, to his long wrestling with the task of constructing a relativistic theory of gravitation, basing its field structure on a symmetric tensor g and the symmetric infinitesimal displacement tensor Γ, and finally to his self-imposed labors of finding a theory of the total field through the generalization of giving up the symmetry properties of the g and Γ fields. From the beginning to the end, Einstein's scientific thought was pervaded by questions of symmetry and the closely related concept of invariance.

But long before he wrote scientific papers, Einstein was Einstein—already at the age of three, playing silently, resisting verbal language, and refusing thereby to accept an externally imposed authority in names and rules by which many another child has had to "civilize" and give up his own curiosity and imaginative play. It is a world that by its very definition we hardly know how to describe. But it is the world in which, from all the evidence we have, the play with geometric and other visual images, and hence the perception of such transformation properties of forms as symmetry and asymmetry, appear to have been basic for the development of successful thought itself.

The ABC of Visual Understanding. The literature on the subject of the visual element of thought in children is small. This deprives us to some degree of one of the important strands in our net, and conversely alerts cognitive psychologists and educators to a promising research topic. But there was one pioneer in this field who, in an unexpected way, now comes into our story. He is Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the Swiss educational reformer. Born in 1746 in Zurich, he was educated at the University of Zurich, and first tried farming in a small town in the Kanton of Aargau. During the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798, a number of children were left without parents or food at Lake Lucerne, and Pestalozzi devoted himself to their care and education during that winter. In 1801 he published his ideas on education in the book *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt,* and from then on he became a widely influential force in education. It is recorded that von Humboldt, Fichte,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mme. de Staël and Talleyrand visited him and his schools.

Basic to Pestalozzi's approach to education were the development of observation, the humanistic approach to each subject, the collaborative and sympathetic relation between teacher and student—and his view that "conceptual thinking is built on visual understanding *(Anschauung)*." His method was, for that reason, to put the ABC of visual understanding ahead of the ABC of letters.

An excerpt from his book will give some indication of the approach followed in his own schools and in those that were founded under his influence:

> I must point out that the ABC of visual understanding is the essential and the only true means of teaching how to judge the shape of all things correctly. Even so, this principle is totally neglected up to now, to the extent of being unknown; whereas hundreds of such means are available for the teaching of numbers and language. This lack of instructional means for the study of visual form should not be viewed as a mere gap in the education of human knowledge. It is a gap in the very foundation of all knowledge at a point to which the learning of numbers and language must be definitely subordinated. My ABC of visual understanding is designed to remedy this fundamental deficiency of instruction; it will insure the basis on which the other means of instruction must be founded.[17]

The "quintessence" of Pestalozzi's fundamental book *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt* was summarized by Albert Richter in these words[18]:

1. The foundation of instruction is the *Anschauung* (visual understanding).

2. Speech (words) must be connected with the *Anschauung*.

3. The time of learning is not the time of judgment, of critique.

4. In every subject, instruction shall begin with the simplest elements, and from that point on be brought forward stepwise in accord with the development of the child—that is to say, in psychological order (sequences).

5. One must rest at every point as long as is necessary for the particular material of instruction to become the pupil's free mental property.

6. Instruction has to follow the way of development, not the way of expostulation, memorization, information.

7. For the instructor, the individuality of his charge should be holy.

8. The main purpose of elementary instruction is not the acquisition of information and skills, but the development and strengthening of mental powers.

9. Ability should follow knowledge; then follows skill.

10. The interaction between instructor and pupil, and particularly school discipline, should be pervaded and guided by love.

11. Instruction should be subordinated to the purpose of education.

12. The foundation of moral-religious development of the child lies in the relationship between mother and child.[19]

One notes the modern and humane ring of many of these guidelines. Still, Pestalozzi himself is quoted as having made this final assessment: "When I look back and ask myself, what have I really achieved for the cause of human instruction? I find this: I have firmly anchored the first and fundamental axiom of instruction in the recognition of *Anschauung* as the absolute foundation of all knowledge."

Success in Aarau. How different a school run on such principles must have been from that which Einstein fled when he left Munich as a boy of about fifteen—his regimented, militaristic school, so verbally oriented, and so deeply unappreciative of him as a student and as a person!

In the late summer of 1895, when Einstein arrived in Zurich to sit for the entrance examination to the Polytechnic Institute, he thought he had put all schools behind him. But then he failed the entrance examination, as we have noted. He had given up his native country and taken steps to renounce his citizenship, he had left his parents in Italy, he was a foreigner in Switzerland, he had failed to get into the Polytechnic Institute. The dislocation was complete.

There ensued a kind of moratorium for this boy who seemingly had failed in many

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways (except, always, in mathematics and physics). The next test being scheduled a year later, he was advised by the director of the Polytechnic Institute to enroll in the Kanton Schule at Aarau, thirty miles northwest of Zurich, the capital of the Kanton of Aargau. There is no doubt that this was a crucial turning point—for while he was at that particular school, everything somehow changed for him, from getting his first great *Gedankenexperiment* that led him to relativity, to finding true friends (one of whom, the son of an instructor in whose house Einstein was a happy boarder, eventually married Einstein's sister, Maja). Later, Einstein's thoughts often and gladly turned to this school. He corresponded, and occasionally met, with several of his classmates for years afterwards. He mentions the school, and his obtaining his *Abitur* there, in his autobiographical note of 1922 or '23, which he had to compose, as is the custom, on receiving the Nobel Prize, for official publication in *Les Prix Nobel*—even though, characteristically, Einstein's essay is otherwise embarrassingly short—only fourteen lines. Just a month before his death he remembered the school again in these words: "It made an unforgettable impression on me, thanks to its liberal spirit and the simple earnestness of the teachers who based themselves on no external authority."[20]

Some of his teachers, particularly the science instructor Fritz Mühlberg, seem to have interested and encouraged Einstein. There also appears to have been an easy atmosphere, relaxed, informal and democratic. In science instruction, too, the aims of general education and humanistic learning were kept foremost. The course prided itself not on memorization, but instead stressed the kind of work that would develop individual thinking. In addition to the more usual learning materials there were excursions, work with specimens in the museum, and laboratory work. Maps and other visual materials seem to have been freely used.

These and other elements in the suggestive though fragmentary descriptions of the school by Einstein's most reliable biographers—Frank, Reiser and Seelig[21]—show that this school seems to have been characterized by many of the fundamental pedagogic guidelines laid down by Pestalozzi. And this prepares us for the discovery that indeed the Kanton Schule of Aarau was first founded in 1802 by democratic patriots, reportedly acting in the spirit of Pestalozzi[22]—just a year after the publication of Pestalozzi's manifesto, and while Pestalozzi himself was running one of his schools at Burgdorf, less than fifty miles away. So it would not be an accident that Einstein may have discovered the strength of his genial scientific imagination at this particular school; here, at last, he was in a place that did not squash, and may well have fostered, the particular style of thinking that was so congenial to him.

Dealing with Antitheses. We began by noting some odd contrasts and polarities that appear in the work and life-style of Einstein. We have added others: early failure and success, handicap in one direction and extraordinary ability in another. In discussing the role of simplicity and symmetry, we found one clue to genius in the proposition that there is, at least in this case, a mutual mapping of the habits and life-style of the genial scientist and of nature's own laws. The investigation of the circumstances surrounding the *Gedankenexperiment* at Aarau, from which the relativity theory grew, supports a more generalized phrasing of our initial hypothesis: At least in this particular case, *there is a mutual mapping of the style of thinking and acting of the genial scientist on the one hand, and of the chief unresolved problems of contemporary science on the other.*

Thus, what seemed to us at first to be puzzling internal polarities in Einstein may equally well be viewed as talents for dealing with the dichotomies that often have turned out to be at the base of the most unyielding problems of science. For example, we have noted earlier that epistemologically the 1905 relativity paper os-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cillates between the positivism of the Machist kind, needed for the definition of the concepts, and, on the other hand, a rational realism needed for the *a priori* declaration of the basic principles of relativity, and that Einstein confessed later to harboring both of these extremes in his own thoughts. But to this day, it is virtually inconceivable that he, or anyone else, could have attained a genuine formulation of relativity without just these two contrasting elements.

Much good and even excellent science can be done in a more monolithic way, neglecting or avoiding any evidence of conceptual dichotomies. But it is not often stressed that such dichotomies are by no means unusual in science. They exist from its smallest observational protocol to the most over-arching theory. Ascending from the lowest level, we note first the antithesis between the obvious, observable, palpable, limited, material object such as a magnet needle, and, say, the field in which it is caught—tenuous, invisible, appearing usually rather mysterious to the beginning student, but commanding, and stretching into infinity. A further step up, and there are conceptually antithetical pairs such as matter and energy, space and time, the gravitational and electromagnetic field—even the theoretical and experimental activity, and the parsimony of a good theory versus the infinite number of actual cases it embraces.

Another step up, and we note the antitheses between the great themata—be it the continuum versus the discrete, or classically causal law versus statistical law, or the mechanistic versus the theistic world interpretation. Such thematic antitheses, expressed in the great current puzzles of science, have haunted such scientists as Newton, Bohr and Einstein, even when lesser scientists could afford the luxury of avoiding such confrontations, and doing more comfortable work on thematically unambiguous problems—an activity similar to that which Einstein once dismissed as seeking the thinnest part of a board in order to drill one's hole there. After all, genius discovers itself not in splendid solutions to little problems, but in the struggle with essentially eternal problems. And those, by their very nature, are apt to be problems arising from thematic conflicts.

It has been lately fashionable in some quarters to think that physical science normally progresses by moving on the whole fairly calmly in one direction and in one stream bed, and that such progress is interrupted only at certain periods of great upheaval in science.

But this can be true only in a limited sense. Not far below the surface, there have coexisted in science, in almost every period since Thales and Pythagoras, sets of two or more antithetical systems or attitudes, for example, one reductionist and the other holistic, or one mechanistic and the other vitalistic, or one positivistic and the other teleological. In addition, there has always existed another set of antitheses or polarities, even though, to be sure, one or the other was at a given time more prominent—namely, between the Galilean (or, more properly, Archimedean) attempt at precision and measurement that purged public, "objective" science of those qualitative elements that interfere with reaching reasonable "objective" agreement among fellow investigators, and, on the other hand, the intuitions, glimpses, daydreams, and *a priori* commitments that make up half the world of science in the form of a personal, private, "subjective" activity.

Science has always been propelled and buffeted by such contrary or antithetical forces. Like vessels with draught deep enough to catch more than merely the surface current, scientists of genius are those who are doomed, or privileged, to experience these deeper currents in their complexity. It is precisely their special sensitivity to contraries that has made it possible for them to do so, and it is an inner necessity that has made them demand nothing less from themselves.

This, it seems to me, is the direction in which to seek for answers to the question of why the Angel of the Lord chose them . . . or, at least, chose one of them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Early drafts of this paper were discussed at the psychobiography seminar of Professor Erik Erikson at Stockbridge, Massachusetts; at Professor Dore Ashton's seminar at the Cooper Union School of Art and Architecture; and at a Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation Symposium held in honor of Professor S. Sambursky. I thank the participants, and particularly Professor Erikson, for illuminating discussions. I also wish to express my indebtedness to Miss Helen Dukas and to the Estate of Albert Einstein for permission to cite from Einstein's writings.

This work is part of a study sponsored by a grant from the National Science Foundation. G. H.

APPENDIX

The following is a summary of Einstein's essay "*Motiv des Forschens,*"[23] with translation of key passages (in quotes). In this remarkable address, given in 1918 in honor of Max Planck (and later mistranslated as "Principles of Research"), Einstein gave us what is perhaps the best autobiographical insight into his own view of the motivation for doing research in science. The analyses and suggestions given in the preceding pages may help in interpreting these charming but intensely charged passages, and in turn may receive illumination from them.

"The Temple of science is a multi-faceted building." In it, many engage in science out of joy in flexing their intellectual muscles, or for utilitarian ends. These are useful persons, to be sure, although external circumstances could easily have made them into engineers, officers, etc. If only such scientists existed, "the Temple would not have arisen."

"If there now came an Angel of the Lord to drive these persons out of the Temple," few scientists would be left in it. But one of them would be Planck, "and that is why we love him."

Now let us turn to those "who found favor with the Angel." They are mostly "rather odd, uncommunicative, solitary fellows, who despite these common characteristics resemble one another really less than the host of the banished."

"What led them into the temple? The answer is not easy to give, and can certainly not apply uniformly. To begin with, I believe with Schopenhauer that one of the strongest motives that lead men to art and science is flight from the everyday life with its painful harshness and wretched dreariness, and from the fetters of one's own shifting desires. One who is more finely tempered is driven to escape from personal existence and to the world of objective observing [*Schauen*] and understanding. This motive can be compared with the longing that irresistibly pulls the town-dweller away from his noisy, cramped quarters and toward the silent, high mountains, where the eye ranges freely through the still, pure air and traces the calm contours that seem to be made for eternity."

"With this negative motive there goes a positive one. Man seeks to form for himself, in whatever manner is suitable for him, a simplified and lucid image of the world [*Bild der Welt*], and so to overcome the world of experience by striving to replace it to some extent by this image. This is what the painter does, and the poet, the speculative philosopher, the natural scientist, each in his own way. Into this image and its formation he places the center of gravity of his emotional life, in order to attain the peace and serenity that he cannot find within the narrow confines of swirling, personal experience."

The theoretical physicists' picture of the world [*Weltbild*] is one among all the possible pictures. It demands vigorous precision in the description of relationships. Therefore the physicist must content himself from the point of view of subject matter with "portraying the simplest occurrences which can be made accessible to our experience"; all more complex occurrences cannot be reconstructed with the necessary degree of subtle accuracy and logical perfection. "Supreme purity, clarity, and certainty, at the cost of completeness."

Once such a valid world image has been achieved, it turns out to apply after all to every natural phenomenon, including all its complexity, and in its completeness. From the general laws on which the structure of theoretical physics rests, "it should be possible to attain by pure deduction the description, that is to say, the theory of every natural process, including those of life, if such a process of deduction were not far beyond the capacity of human thinking. To these elementary laws there leads no logical path, but only intuition, supported by being sympathetically in touch with experience [*Einfühlung in die Erfahrung*]." It is true that this uncertain methodology may in principle give rise to many systems of theoretical physics with equal claim; but in fact it has turned out that at any time just one such system is generally accepted to be decidedly superior. "Though there is no logical bridge from experience to the basic principles of theory," in practice it is agreed that "the world of experience does define the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theoretical system uniquely. . . . This is what Leibnitz termed happily 'pre-established harmony'. Physicists accuse many an epistemologist of not giving sufficient weight to this circumstance."

"The longing to behold that pre-established harmony is the source of the inexhaustible perseverance and patience with which Planck [or, we may add here, as throughout, Einstein] has given himself over to the most general problems of our science, not letting himself be diverted to more profitable and more easily attained ends. I have often heard colleagues trying to trace this attitude to extraordinary will power and discipline—in my opinion, wrongly. The state of feeling [*Gefühlszustand*] which makes one capable of such achievements is akin to that of the religious worshipper or of one who is in love; his daily striving arises from no deliberate decision or program, but out of immediate necessity. . . ."

NOTES

[1] L. Infeld, *Albert Einstein* (New York, 1950), p. 118.

[2] Such an "oscillation" is described, for example, in Antonina Vallentin, *Einstein: A Biography* (London, 1954), p. 27.

[3] In the lead essay in the collection *Science et Synthèse* (Paris, 1967), Ferdinand Gonseth writes on Einstein's methodological autonomy in his early work, and concludes, "I believe that the seeds of all that followed were contained within his assumption of the freedom to discard a proof in favor of a conviction born of the pursuit of truth." (p. 28)

[4] "Science and New Styles of Thought," *The Graduate Journal,* vol. VII, no. 2, Spring 1967.

[5] See also one of Einstein's earliest letters (1905), written to his friend, Conrad Habicht, and describing the various investigations he was just then working on. In one sentence Einstein describes the nascent relativity theory: "The fourth work lies at hand in draft [*liegt im Konzept vor*] and is an electrodynamics of moving bodies making use of a *modification* of the theory of space and time; you will surely be interested in the purely kinematic part of this work." [Italics supplied]

And to Maurice Solovine, Einstein writes a year later, soon after his first papers on relativity were published, and in the middle of its further development: "Nothing much here by way of science. Soon I shall enter the stationary and sterile stage of life in which one complains about the revolutionary orientation of youth."

[6] As Einstein's biographer P. Frank pointed out, the paradox continued to preoccupy him ever more urgently throughout his whole period of study at the Polytechnicum in Zurich. "He studied all works of the great physicists to the purpose of finding whether they could contribute to the solution of this problem concerning the nature of light." Translated from P. Frank, *Einstein* (Munich, 1949), p. 40.

[7] I am grateful to Professor Pelseneer for a copy of the six-page essay. The covering letter that Einstein had sent with the essay to his uncle, Caesar Koch, received later the added note in Einstein's own hand: "1894 or 95. A. Einstein (date supplied 1950)." The work was probably composed while the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old boy was preparing his first attempt to enter the Polytechnic Institute in Zurich.

[8] The significance and validity of childhood experiences of this sort among scientists and inventors have not been sufficiently studied, although interesting material exists. One recalls here Newton's reported construction of toys, and Ernst Mach's account of the lasting impression made on him by a visit, as a small child, to a wind-operated grain mill. Orville Wright, when asked when and how he and his brother Wilbur first became interested in the problem of flight, responded: "Our first interest began when we were children. Father brought home to us a small toy actuated by a rubber spring which would lift itself into the air. We built a number of copies of this toy, which flew successfully."

[9] Shortly after a draft of this paper had been prepared, I came upon a congenial passage on the same subject, pointing to the existence of "certain tensions," in the foreword by Russell McCormmach, editor of *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences* (Philadelphia, 1970), vol. II, pp. X-XI. In recent correspondence, Professor McCormmach kindly has drawn my attention also to C. P. Snow's profile of Einstein in *A Variety of Men* (New York, 1967), in which the existence of some paradoxes is noted. Needless to say, literary figures have also been subject to such analysis; one of the less familiar examples may be V. I. Lenin's scathing discussion of the "glaring contradictions in Tolstoy's works, views, doctrines," in "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution" (1908).

[10] P. A. Schilpp, ed., *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist* (Evanston, 1949), pp. 679-680.

[11] H. Weyl, *Symmetry* (Princeton, 1952), pp. 17, 130, 132.

[12] For a detailed discussion of Einstein's rejection of the *ad hoc* elements in physics, see G. Holton, "Einstein, Michelson, and the 'Crucial' Experiment," *ISIS,* vol. 60, 2, no. 202, Summer 1969, pp. 132-197.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

[13] Published in Hadamard's book, *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* (Princeton, 1945), pp. 142-143.

[14] Einstein might have added "auditory" to visual and muscular. See his remark to R. S. Shankland (*American Journal of Physics,* vol. 31, 1963, p. 50): "When I read, I hear the words. Writing is difficult, and I communicate this way very badly."

[15] Max Wertheimer, in the chapter "The Thinking that Led to the Theory of Relativity," in *Productive Thinking* (New York, 1945), p. 184.

[16] This point has been additionally documented, most recently in the record of remarks made by Einstein in 1938 and published in 1971: "I grasp things as quickly as I did when I was younger. My power, my particular ability, lies in *visualizing the effects, consequences, and possibilities,* and the bearings on present thought of the discoveries of others. I grasp things in a broad way easily. I cannot do mathematical calculations easily. I do them not willingly and not readily." (Italics supplied)

[17] Translation of quotation as given in Rudolph Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley, 1969), p. 299. Arnheim's book itself is very suggestive, and should be consulted.

[18] In the appendix to the fourth edition (Leipzig, 1880) of Pestalozzi's book, *op. cit.,* pp. 184-185; Richter based his work on Morf's *Biographie Pestalozzis.*

[19] This attitude may well account in good part for the fact, as Richter reports (*ibid.,* p. 184), that major opposition arose against Pestalozzi as a consequence of his remarks concerning religious education, and that in particular this work was considered an "estrangement from Christ."

[20] Cf. Carl Seelig, ed., *Helle Zeit, dunkle Zeit* (Zurich, 1956), p. 9.

[21] E.g., Carl Seelig, *Albert Einstein* (Zurich, 1954), pp. 16 and 21-24. There also was a marked anticlerical tradition in the school at Aarau, as documented by some of Einstein's classmates.

[22] Noted, for example, by F. Herneck, *Albert Einstein* (Berlin, 1967), p. 49.

[23] Based on the essay published in English translation in *Ideas and Opinions by Albert Einstein* (New York, 1954), pp. 224-227.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Magritte: The Song of the Glass Keys and The Cape of Storms

LAWRENCE RAAB

There is no country
where you could not paint a street
and walk down it
or a door in a wall or a window
inside a window
to look out on the green horizon

The secrets of these places
are not concealed or explained

though single words have been inscribed
upon the surface of things
souvenirs of the hunters who turned
their faces into their hands
remembered by a stranger leaning over a stone bridge
beside a lion

Thus the covering of dreams unfolds
to show the lining and these keys—

a clock which is the wind
a valise which is a valise

No object is so fond of its name
that another cannot be found to live with it

The lives of saints and sleep
melt into each other

while the tuba is consumed with the Lord's fire

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while solutions return to their questions without asking
and you arrange the relics of evening
on the table of this strict light

Through the door in the wall
through the window inside the window
through the silence

you carry the fact of the shoes
the fact of the wind and of the woman
the fact of the rain

Great clouds creep across the earth
and the storm falls into them like a song

✪ LAWRENCE RAAB is a fellow in creative writing at Syracuse University. His poems have appeared in a number of periodicals including *Atlantic, Encounter* and *Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Doubleday will publish his first volume of poetry, *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, in August, 1972.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Literary Criticism and Literary Radicals

IRVING HOWE

In the spring of 1971 there occurred, at the Philadelphia meetings of the Northeast Modern Language Association, a debate between Professor Louis Kampf and myself on the topic that provides the title of this essay. Printed below, in but slightly amended form, is the text of my remarks.

Old questions do not die, nor do they fade away. Is there a distinctive radical aesthetic? Are there Marxist insights that can be brought to bear on literature? Is there a "radical content" in traditional literature or is the radical critic to be confined to a body of writings designated as radical literature? Such questions, half-forgotten since the thirties, are now earnestly being rehearsed at least among a minority of younger English professors, and those of us who have reached middle age and remember the last time they were debated, can hardly be expected to have an unambiguous response to this revival. I greet these questions like aging friends, the mysteries of whose existence I no longer hope to understand; I find in the current styles of reconsideration little reason for pleasure or source of illumination.

Let me slide for a moment into reminiscence. When I began to write literary criticism in the late forties, it never occurred to me that I had the possibility of "choosing" the Marxist method. I simply sat down to articulate my responses to writers and books, expecting, no doubt naïvely, that my "point of view" or "method" would emerge on its own. I had regarded myself as a Marxist since my early teens and—at least as much because of origins as convictions—had read a fair number of books. But at the point when I began to dabble in literary criticism, my Marxism had lost its "totalistic" ideological character. I had survived the shock of discovering that Engels was mistaken or outdated in anthropology; I had gotten over the still greater shock of learning that dialectical materialism might not be the last word in philosophy; and I was beginning to experience the pain of trying to make out where the socialist idea had gone astray: why it was that the October Revolution, once seen as the liberating event of modern history, had ended with one of the great tyrannies of modern history.

A certain disorganization of fixed premises can be very useful to the mind. The Marxism I now tried to work with, both in politics and criticism, was a method of inquiry that had, first of all, to be turned upon the Marxism of conventional use as it lay rutted in a given number of axioms. My Marxism was that of the anti-Stalinist left, struggling between residual dogmas and libertarian yearnings. With such convictions (or confusions), one could not imagine oneself as commissar or inquisitor, although one identified readily enough with their victims. With such convictions (or confusions), one became a little more open

✪ Distinguished Professor of English at the City University of New York, IRVING HOWE is a literary and social critic and editor of the socialist bi-monthly *Dissent*. Among his books are: *The Decline of the New, Politics and the Novel, Steady Work* and *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to ideas that only yesterday had been brushed into "the dustbin of history"—ideas such as the indispensability of political democracy to socialist goals, the underlying moral links between liberal values and socialist methods, the centrality of law in a good society. And one could put aside the rigid habits, the glowering certainties of the Bolshevik mind that led some people to suppose history their exclusive possession.

Yet the tradition of Marxism remained a powerful force in my mind, as it still does. The best of the Marxist-oriented literary critics, who also never thought to *choose* the Marxist method, were decidedly skeptical as to whether in the criticism of literature there is a Marxist method at all. What they were hoping to do was to bring to bear their sensibility, colored as it then was by Marxism, upon those works that roused their sharpest immediate interest; and that meant to employ categories and insights associated with Marxism, often as preliminaries to the critical task of illuminating the properties, terms and structures of novels and poems. Marxism was conceived not as an all-purpose system of cognition that could draw, fix and place an endless range of phenomena—we were, by then, no longer so naïve as to believe that. No; Marxism was seen, at best, as a group of ideas that could enrich the equipment of a modern intellectual and could coexist or even clash with the ideas of other commanding minds. So firmly was Marxism by now established in Western thought, it had become part of our heritage, to be absorbed, refined, and handled with care.

Where the work of literature seemed to call for certain categories of analysis that Marxism might provide; where a reading of *Middlemarch* or *Bleak House* might profit from commentary on the dynamics of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism in England and its refraction within the novel itself, these would be within the critic's reach. And since the topics critics choose to write about reflect their central intellectual concerns, it was only natural that the Marxist-oriented critics should turn toward the kinds of works in regard to which political and social categories had a vivid application. Yet, almost intuitively, these critics showed an awareness that, when brought to bear on literary texts, Marxism was only of limited value. The social world of *Middlemarch* might be illuminated by a Marxist scrutiny, but hardly the psychology of Casaubon and still less the stylistics by means of which George Eliot made her valuating epigrams integral to the dramatic texture of her work.

In my own book of criticism, *Politics and the Novel,* where the influence of a heterodox Marxism is perhaps visible, I found that each time I made a foray into "the method," loyalty to the text required that I move, backward or forward, to certain insights not customarily part of the Marxist heritage. I had chosen to write about novels that seemed explicitly political in their reverberation, yet to my surprise and (at the time) uneasiness, I found that in all these books politics was not at the center of things. Politics was a presence in the novel that combined the functions of catalyst and obstacle—indeed, an apparent obstacle to the resolution of the novel's theme that, nevertheless, turned out to be a catalyst. Politics provided the grit of resistance, the substance of mundane temporality, against which the writer released and refined his vision of the world. I had therefore to acknowledge the power, in Dostoevski and Stendhal, Turgenev and Conrad, of a belief in some realm of values apart from, and sometimes felt to be superior to, public life: a belief that represented a turning toward the impulse of "pastoral" which in all historical epochs signifies a common yearning to pull away, establish some distance from historical pressures. Years later the Austrian Communist or ex-Communist critic, Ernest Fisher, would speak of art as "the triumph of reality over ideology," and that seems to me largely right.

What could Marxism tell us about the values and emotions, the deepest inclinations of passion and vision in even these most political of novels? Not terribly much. To the extent that Marxists pretended that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their world view could encompass the materials of such novels, they vulgarized them—perhaps I did too—and betrayed their own commitment. About the way a literary tradition, in J. V. Cunningham's phrase, provides a body of assumptions, limitations and learning "capable of being applied to the production of what are called original works"; about the formation of a style, "the constant form—and sometimes the constant elements, qualities and expression," as Meyer Schapiro describes it, "in the art of an individual or group"; about the problem of valuation and the elements of preference that go into it—about such literary questions Marxists could tell us little. Not nothing, only little. Those critics who found the Marxist approach useful either confined themselves to texts where the subject matter seemed especially congenial, or they slid, almost unawares, into traditional modes of literary analysis once they had done whatever they could with the categories of Marxism. And thereby they confirmed the view of Leon Trotsky that "a work of art should in the first place be judged by its own law, that is, by the law of art."

With time, the Marxist-oriented critics began to move beyond a conscious adherence to Marxism, although seldom did this entail a formal repudiation. They did not feel an obligation to ask themselves whether they were in fact "applying" it or being sufficiently orthodox in their application, even though its impress surely remained upon their work. At least some of them came to feel that Marxism offered too rigid an approach to modern history: Marxism had failed, for the most part, to anticipate that the destruction of capitalism, far from leading to a humane liberation, might yield a new tyranny. Marxism had perhaps overestimated the revolutionary energies of the working class in the industrialized countries.

And insofar as questions arose about the validity of Marxism in politics, still more severe doubts had to occur as to its usefulness in criticism. Marxism seemed too coarse a method to help the critic beyond the preliminaries of locating the social coordinates of a novel or poem—it dealt with history in grand sweeps rather than texts in fine particulars; it fixed the phases of history into a few large and loose periods that did not always prove convenient to the literary historian trying to account for nuances of change in a culture; and it posited a relation between "economic base" and "cultural superstructure" that allowed insufficient credence to the autonomous powers of imagination and failed to specify clearly enough the relation between social interest and artistic idea as an alleged reflection of that interest. Marxism was a method very powerful within its own realm, the realm of history: indeed, so powerful that only an extremely good mind could avoid being overwhelmed by it. But good minds, apart from their rarity, were likely to write intelligent criticism no matter what their formal ideological allegiance might be.

The central claim for the relevance of Marxism to literary criticism was that it stressed and illuminated the historicity of literary periods, literary groups, literary works. It persuaded us of the truism that in revealing himself the writer reflects his society; he indicates, at the least, what ranges of personality and emotional experience are possible within that society. Very well; the schematic sharpness that Marxism could bring to a given historical or literary period might yield a valuable if overfocused clarity. But even within this claim for historicity there was a grave weakness. For while the Marxist-oriented critics rightly sought to discover relationships between society and culture, as also between culture and text, they steadily neglected—and given their inclinations perhaps had to neglect—the inner historical development of literature. They were weak in the kind of historical sense about which T. S. Eliot has said that it "compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of his own country has a simultaneous existence. . ." About the relations between a given literary period and its historical setting, the Marxist critics might have useful things to say.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About the way a given phase of literature comprised a response to existing models and possibilities; about the way a poet might consciously set himself to imitate or repudiate an earlier master; about the disciplines and voices mandated by the inner history of genres; about the inflections of language registering fine shades of meaning—about all such matters Marxist critics were likely to be mute.

I have recently been reading a study by Professor Paul Fussell in which he shows how Dr. Johnson, in composing some of his letters of execration, used rhetorical models that had been made available to him by some recent predecessors. A study of this kind seems possible only to critics who work closely from "the inside," and who command the kind of scholarship that is prepared to regard the course of literary development as self-sufficient, if only for the "frozen moment" of the given study. Marxist critics, by contrast, tended to make raids upon literature, treating it as a "secondary" reflex of social struggle or an occasion for vindicating the primacy of what they already know.

In the 1950s those of us who had been strongly influenced by Marxism found ourselves caught up in a polemical struggle with the New Critics. People like myself had become skeptical not only of the encompassing claims of Marxism but also of the claims for all encompassing critical methods. I believed and still do believe that the best prescription for criticism has been given by T. S. Eliot: "the only method is to be very intelligent." Yet we argued hard against the New Critics' ideas—more so than against their critical performances—and by and large I'm prepared to stand by our argument. What I could not then see was that the ahistoricism some New Critics preached, although few really practised, was more valuable to those who opposed them than to those who became their disciples. From the New Critics one could learn about the centrality and dignity of the text; the uses of close structural analysis; and still more, the virtues of an intense commitment to the study of literature. Men like Tate, Blackmur, Warren and Ransom were honorable intellectual opponents, and thereby our teachers too. All they finally demanded, of ally or opponent, was that one should care passionately about literature *in its own right* and find the study of it worthy of a mature intelligence. Their work was more important than their theories, and their values more important than their work.

In the last few decades there have been other times when one could feel that a critic's readiness to live by the humane values and refining powers of literature was more important than his method or creed—notably so in the struggle during the late thirties against cultural Stalinism. That struggle was mainly political, against the lure of a totalitarian movement, and only secondarily against its quick-change vulgarities. Today, however, we are in the midst of a struggle more deep-going than any that has occurred since the period of Stalinism; a *kultur kampf* that racks intellectual life and the academic profession. This struggle goes far beyond familiar disputes, entirely proper and necessary, as to how literature should be read or criticized or taught; it calls into question the value of literature itself, particularly when there is no utilitarian rationale for reading or studying it. In an essay published a few years ago under the title, "The New York Intellectuals," I tried to indicate some of the main causes and motifs of this struggle. Forgive me if I quote a few lines from it.

> In motive and spring [this new phase of our culture] represents a wish to shake off the bleeding heritage of modernism and reinstate one of those periods of the collective naïf which seems endemic to American experience. The new sensibility is impatient with ideas. It is impatient with literary structures of complexity and coherence. . . It wants instead works of literature—though literature may be the wrong word—that will be as absolute as the sun, as unarguable as orgasm, and as delicious as a lollipop. It schemes to throw off the weight of nuance and ambiguity, legacies of high consciousness and tired blood. It is weary of the habit of reflection, the making of distinctions, the squareness of dialectic, the tarnished gold

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of inherited wisdom. . . It has no taste for the ethical nail-biting of those writers of the left who suffered defeat and could never again accept the narcotic of certainty. It is sick of those magnifications of irony that Mann gave us, sick of those visions of entrapment into which Kafka led us, sick of those shufflings of daily horror and grace that Joyce left us. It breathes contempt for rationality . . . and a hostility to the artifices and decorums of high culture. It despises liberal values, liberal cautions, liberal virtues. It is bored with the past: for the past is a fink.

How are we to explain the rise of this sensibility, and what is still more remarkable, its acceptance by a considerable portion of the academic community? The question requires lengthy and complex answers, but here I can only offer a few brief and simplified notes.

Cultural modernism has become the victim of a primitivist counterthrust emerging from its own devotion to the obscure, the recondite, the difficult. By its very nature, modernism must define itself as the claim of a beleaguered minority; today, however, it suffers the embarrassment of popularity, the sweet death rattle of acclaim. What follows, I think, is a mode of decadence, a stylish parody in which the modern masters are celebrated straight into betrayal, and the once-revolutionary perception of alienation becomes reduced to a cheerful domestic nihilism.

We are experiencing a fallout, delayed but powerful, of totalitarian and authoritarian ideologies, debris from the thirties, no longer hardened into fanatical mass movements but now transformed into a style of expressivity for middle-class *enragés* who find wisdom in mind-blowing. A profound symptom of the disintegration of Marxism, this phenomenon is allied in the United States with a strong native tradition of feeling that is equally hostile to mind. Students of American culture know the provenance and persistence of this tradition; it has appeared in the past as several waves of antihighbrowism and anti-academicism, although never before has it found so cozy a reception within the universities themselves.

During the past few decades there has appeared a series of claims as to the obsolescence of the word, indeed of print itself—claims, it will surprise no one, developed at great length in print. These have led to a loss of confidence among many teachers and critics whose attachment to literature was never very strong to begin with, and has provided a rationale for hostility to literary study on the part of those who find themselves ill at ease with the task of teaching literature.

We are at the beginning of an enormous experiment, the first effort in history to provide higher education to large numbers of the young. In principle, this must be welcomed by every democrat; in practice, it presents severe difficulties to those who also believe in the preservation of the cultural heritage and the idea of a serious university. None of us quite knows how to cope with these problems. Some conservative professors respond with a snobbish contempt for the smelly plebes; some pseudoradical professors with an equally snobbish contempt for scholarly care and literary autonomy.

For these large assertions let me now offer some homely evidence. I take all my quotes from the works of Professor Louis Kampf, an acknowledged spokesman for the "leftists" in the English professorial world and, as I write, established in the presidency of the Modern Language Association.

Professor Kampf is overheard, in a recent article, discussing his scholarly "expertise" with his students at M.I.T.:

You're supposed to ask me what I'm expert in. I'm an expert in the late satires of Pope as they relate to Horace. I hope to divest myself of that soon. But the way things are in this profession, I could give seminars on the topic for 30 years . . . I would be a big success. That could be my bag. I could be the international expert.

The prediction as to international consequences is, perhaps, excessively optimistic, but as for the more realistic prospect of divestiture—one wonders precisely how long it need take. In any case, behind such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sentiments as those of Professor Kampf lies a conceit by no means fresh among kinds of radicals who mistake ignorance for intransigence. Among professors, however, it is rather a novelty. I have myself met a good many radicals and a fair number of professors, but never a radical and seldom a professor who struck me as suffering from an *excess* of knowledge. The presumption of such excess, even in regard to so limited a matter as the relation of Pope to Horace, is one we ought not hurry to declare.

One knows what Professor Kampf's ostensible target is here: that much literary scholarship is sterile and trivial make-work. As indeed it is. But I fail to see how literary scholarship is, in this regard, to be differentiated from much left-wing journalism, cultural criticism, literary analysis, poetry, fiction or any other branch of letters. The rate of failure in intellectual work is fearsome. Casaubons overshadow all of us; nowadays, some write not merely for P.M.L.A. but also for the *New York Review of Books;* they rise not merely in the M.L.A. but also in the insurgent New University Conference.

Professor Kampf, in releasing his contempt for conventional modes of education, reports that he was recently teaching a seminar on Proust, "and my head was getting scrambled." Boredom reigned. And then students took over a campus building and Professor Kampf transferred his seminar to liberated territory. "The reading of Proust became . . . intimately tied to the goings-on in . . . the hall . . . Proust's sensibility became politicized for us. . ." And this depended "on a group of people becoming a body and therefore on the politics which unite disparate sensibilities in a common struggle."

A number of things need to be said about this notable passage: first, that a professor of literature who finds that teaching Proust "scrambles his brains" might well consider vocational retraining; second, that the "politicizing" of Proust's sensibility is left undescribed and, given the nature of his sensibility, this may be regarded as an act of mercy; third, that the notion that a literary response can be passionate only if socketed into political action is a betrayal of literature and a small service to politics; fourth, that the premise that an experience takes on psychic charge only "if a group becomes a body" is a disastrous concession to the suicidal negation of the False Collective. And besides, it is profligate to hope that for each seminar we can arrange the take-over of a building as a strategy of pedagogical stimulation. At some point our students will have to read books by themselves, in the terrors of privacy.

Professor Kampf continues to explain his estrangement from the literary tradition. He has discovered that many great writers of the past did not think as we should like them to, and therefore might not like him. Indeed, he is certain they would not like him. At one point, reports Professor Kampf, "[I took] a friend of Lord Bolingbroke as my model. [But] neither Swift nor Pope would have received me in his home."

This domiciliar theory of relevance rests upon a total refusal of the historical sense. How Professor Kampf can know that Swift and Pope would have refused to receive him, I cannot say; nor am I at all sure he is right; nor do I see a quick way of deciding; nor, finally, does it make the slightest difference to our capacity for enjoying *Gulliver's Travels* or *The Dunciad.* But as a new approach to the literary past, Professor Kampf's remark offers intriguing possibilities. One could consider the great writers whom one would refuse to allow into one's own home; or consider those to whom one would refuse to lend money; or consider the women writers of the nineteenth century whom one might find unsatisfactory for matrimony. . .

Ranging past the unhospitable geniuses of the eighteenth century, Professor Kampf finds himself unsettled by the whole of the literary past:

> Whom did the values represented by Homer's Achilles serve? Are we to take the reactionary and mercenary objectives of Balzac as merely an adjunct to his artistry? We take the concept of tragedy to represent the West's most pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

found understanding of man's place in the world. Yet is its counterrevolutionary acceptance of fate something we are supposed to teach as a received value?

So austere a judgment of the nature of tragedy is likely to lead to an equally austere judgment of other modes of the imagination. For does not comedy frequently lead men to reconcile themselves to their society, which may be supposed even more counterrevolutionary than becoming reconciled to fate? And what of tragi-comedy, twice to be condemned because doubly reconciling?

Yet I think there is something to be said in behalf of Professor Kampf's view of tragedy, perhaps more than he realizes. Tragedy, although it need not lead to withdrawal or quiescence, cannot easily be reconciled with those messianic or authoritarian versions of utopianism that, in the confidence of a stranglehold on history, have led to dictatorship and terror. Insofar as it may persuade men of the advisability of limits—although I am not at all sure that such a persuasion is in fact a likely consequence—tragedy may indeed be judged an enemy by persons of Professor Kampf's political outlook. So may all of literature.

And indeed the president of the Modern Language Association seems not sure that he wants literature to reach the masses. For Professor Kampf argues that "initiating the 'underprivileged' to the cultural treasures of the West could be a form of oppression—a weapon in the hands of those who rule."

And so it could, just as the twentieth-century revolutions Professsor Kampf hails have shown themselves also to be counter-revolutions. Yet if we were to conclude that the oppressed classes should be denied access to "the cultural treasures of the West," or even if we were to minimize the importance of their acquiring these treasures on the ground that they already have "a culture of their own," we would be acquiescing in their deprivation, itself a result of class oppression. We would be celebrating cultural backwardness in the name of political advance.

Now it is partly true, but only partly, that as Professor Kampf writes, "High culture itself . . . tends to reinforce the given alignments of power within the society." But it is also true, if again only partly, that serious literature has an inherently critical thrust in relation to all our institutions and values. The traditional view of Marxism, held by all its wings and still in my judgment entirely valid, has been that the high culture of the past is a conquest of the race wrested from the nightmare of history, which class societies have denied to the masses, and that a central task of a socialist society would be to make that culture available and significant for the whole of humanity. If today we see greater difficulties in reaching this goal than our grandfathers did, that is hardly a reason to abandon it. Jean Jaurès, the guiding spirit of French socialism, wrote that "Socialism takes its norms of judgment from its heritage of bourgeois culture." Lenin ridiculed the view that "one could become a communist without acquiring the sum of knowledge accumulated by mankind." Lunacharski wrote,

> There are people who believe that every action in favor of the "old" science and "old" art is a compromise with bourgeois taste . . . No! . . . the proletariat must put on the full armor of the general human culture . . .

And Trotsky put the matter with great lucidity:

> The art of past centuries has made man more complex and flexible, has raised his mentality to a higher level, has enriched him in an all-round way. This enrichment is a precious achievement of culture. Mastery of the art of the past is therefore a necessary precondition not only for the creation of new art but also for the building of the new society. . . If we were groundlessly to repudiate the art of the past, we should at once become poorer spiritually.

We have come to the heart of the matter. The idea of historical and cultural continuity has always been under attack in the United States, at times by philistines of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the right and more recently by philistines of "relevance" who suppose themselves on the left. But such a continuity is the essential premise for a living relationship to literature, as well as for a vital study of literature. On this, profound disagreements in politics notwithstanding, T. S. Eliot and Leon Trotsky concur. And the idea of continuity is also indispensable—I say this in behalf of those of us who care—to any vision of socialism that would embody the values of freedom and humaneness. In the coming decade, this commitment to cultural continuity will be a prime obligation for intellectuals who take their calling seriously, for teachers truly responsible to their students, and for those intellectuals and teachers who care to work for a better society.

Perhaps, in a less solemn way, I can sum up the matter with an anecdote in which I will ask my readers, surely adept in the ways of symbolism, to see the idea of culture in the guise of a cigar. In the early twenties the leader of the I.W.W., Big Bill Haywood, was going abroad and, as he left, granted an interview to the reporters. They noticed that he was smoking a twenty-five-cent cigar, very expensive for those days, and twitted him on this indulgence. "Boys," he answered, "nothing is too good for the proletariat."

Two Cold Rivers

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Two cold rivers meet in a cave. They
start for the desert. Together,
they pass where we stand. "Which of
those rivers had more of the answer?"
In this cave, how can we tell?

Under a streetlight or at lunch
or while we admire the city, there goes Aeneas,
slipping through the shadows, fearful but immune,
watching our millions pass in mourning so deep
we don't know it. He sees the dead walking away.

We the living stand here like stones.

✪ WILLIAM STAFFORD, who teaches English at Lewis and Clark College, was Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress last year. His poetry collections are *Traveling Through the Dark, The Rescued Year* and *Allegiances.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REAPPRAISALS

The Alger Hiss Case Revisited

ALLEN WEINSTEIN

Once upon a time, when the cold war was young, an editor of *Time* magazine accused the president of the Carnegie Foundation of having been a Soviet espionage agent. The *Time* editor made his charge stick, with the aid of a House investigating committee, an obscure young congressman, a tough federal prosecutor, the director of the F.B.I. and two hundred and sixty-three agents. As a result, the onetime foundation president went to jail, his reputation ruined; the onetime magazine editor, although vindicated, died in 1961 still obsessed with the case; the obscure young congressman eventually became the thirty-seventh president of the United States; the House committee continued hunting for un-American activities although, in recent years, under an assumed name; the government prosecutor became a federal judge; and, at last report, the director of the F.B.I. continued to guard the republic from past, present and future subversives.

Twenty-one years have passed since the jury at Alger Hiss's second trial pronounced him guilty, but the case remains controversial and the jury's verdict still stirs doubt. Almost a dozen books have dealt with the case since 1950, most of them partisan accounts dispensing either pro-Hiss or pro-Chambers versions. Did Hiss become an undercover Communist while serving as a New Deal official, and did he turn over classified State Department documents to Whittaker Chambers, an admitted Communist agent? Or did Chambers, for obscure and malevolent reasons of his own, deliberately set out to frame and destroy a distinguished public servant?

The case lived on in American political debate, as Republicans invoked Hiss's presumed treachery to indict the Democratic party for tolerating Communists in the federal government during the New Deal-Fair Deal era. To many liberals, on the other hand, the assault on Hiss presaged an attempt to discredit the entire range of federal domestic and foreign achievements since 1933. Hiss's conviction, most analysts agree, soon "revolutionized public opinion" on the question of Communism in American government. "Without the Alger Hiss case," Earl Latham wrote in his standard monograph on the McCarthy era's spy-probes, "the six-year controversy that followed might have been a much tamer affair, and the Communist issue somewhat more tractable." Within a month after his conviction, the British atomic spy Klaus Fuchs had been arrested and Senator Joseph McCarthy had made his famous Wheeling, West Virginia, speech launching himself into the political spotlight. The new era of anti-Communist politics had acquired its leader—and its name.

Richard Nixon's leadership in the probe by the House Committee on Un-American Activities of the Hiss-Chambers affair restored the prestige of that committee, and the case had a profound impact upon Nixon's own career. His reputation among Republicans as the successful spy-hunter who pressured Whittaker Chambers into surrendering the microfilms that led to Hiss's indictment helped him to secure a

✪ ALLEN WEINSTEIN, who teaches history at Smith College, is working on a study of the cold war and American society. He wrote *Prelude to Populism: Origins of the Silver Issue* and edited *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Senate seat in 1950 and the vice-presidential nomination in 1952. During that campaign, he repeatedly attacked the Democratic presidential nominee, Adlai Stevenson, for having given a deposition testifying to Hiss's good character during their years of service for the State Department. The Hiss case reached its climax as a national political issue during the 1952 campaign, particularly in Nixon's speeches and those of Joseph McCarthy.

Because of the many symbolic meanings assigned to the Hiss case by politicians and intellectuals alike, the historian who combs through the episode's records—which include a congressional committee investigation, legal depositions, two trial transcripts and the secondary accounts—finds himself in the middle of a battleground. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, since the question of vindicating Hiss's guilt or innocence reflects a writer's judgment concerning an entire range of public issues, issues such as the meaning and merit of the cold war, the treatment of domestic Communists, the response by intellectuals to their own radical pasts, the true extent of Communist infiltration into government during the New Deal, and the proper role of congressional committees in investigating subversion.

The facts that would establish Alger Hiss's legal guilt or innocence have become enveloped by this larger quest for the meaning of the Hiss case itself. Almost every analysis of the case has begun with the assumption that *either* Alger Hiss *or* Whittaker Chambers was a complete perjurer, that one man's story of their relationship was essentially truthful and the other's a tissue of lies. Yet the credibility of either man can be assessed in several ways: first, by determining whether Hiss and Chambers enjoyed a friendship that went beyond Hiss's claim to have known his accuser briefly as a journalist in 1935 and 1936 (this alleged friendship—*guilt by intimacy*—formed the basis of the grand jury's second perjury count, that Hiss knew Chambers after January, 1937); second, by seeing if Hiss was a member of a Communist cell or study group during the New Deal (or, in other words, was there *guilt by association?*); third, by judging whether Hiss committed espionage (that is, did the evidence in the case demonstrate *guilt by documentation?*). Most of Chambers' testimony bore directly on the first and third of these charges—his presumably extensive familiarity with the personal lives of Alger and Priscilla Hiss and, after November, 1948, his claim that Hiss had stolen certain State Department documents. Most of the corroborating evidence presented at the two trials also concerned these two areas, forcing the rationale underlying Hiss's conviction to follow an inverted syllogism that ran something like this: *if* Alger Hiss knew Whittaker Chambers intimately, and *if* Hiss stole the State Department records, then he *must have been* a Communist. In examining the case, however, it might be helpful to consider each kind of evidence in turn rather than mixing the three categories, as most previous writers have done.

Attempting to prove the existence of a friendship with Hiss, Chambers drew a portrait of the Hisses' lives and habits that appears partially unreliable. For one thing, many of Chambers' most obvious reminiscences concerning the Hisses later proved erroneous. Hiss was not deaf in one ear (the ear over which Hiss had cupped his hand in well-publicized press photos), nor were the Hisses teetotalers, nor was their stepson Timmy a "puny little boy," and Hiss *did* attend church. Also, two close neighbors challenged Chambers' claim that the Hisses had been summer guests for a seven-to-ten-day period in 1935 at Smithtown, Pennsylvania.

Whittaker and Esther Chambers displayed, on the other hand, some familiarity with the domestic arrangements of the Hisses, despite the latter couple's insistence that they had befriended the Chambers family only briefly in 1935. It seemed curious to many that Alger and Priscilla Hiss, so formal and correct in their ordinary private lives, should have offered their apartment to Chambers in 1935, a casual acquaintance, and have transferred to him a used automobile. Hiss later claimed that both transactions had been based upon his pity for Chambers' poverty and upon prior monetary arrangements but that the latter had welshed on payment. Yet even

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

avowed believers in Hiss's innocence have confessed difficulty in explaining these transactions.

One other fact on which both men agreed also bolstered the evidence of close association. Chambers, supposedly acting on orders from Communist superiors, had acquired several oriental rugs for delivery to highly placed government agents, one of whom was Hiss. The latter remembered receiving a rug, but only as partial, belated payment for use of the Hiss apartment and car. Although the rug incident helped to persuade HUAC of Chambers' veracity, it did not figure prominently in the trials, since no witnesses testified to the rug's actual transfer from Chambers to Hiss. On other matters, Chambers' memory proved less than reliable, especially during the crucial months between August and December, 1948, before he began receiving assistance from F.B.I. researchers, who counseled him during the two trials. Thus, Chambers lied, according to the real-estate broker involved, when he claimed that the Hisses had originally considered joining him in the purchase of a Maryland farm that Chambers later acquired on his own. He also told a variety of conflicting stories concerning the collection of Communist party dues from Hiss, offering HUAC at least three versions of the procedure involved.

Similar contradictions marked much of Chambers' testimony concerning his "close association" with the Hisses. In the best known of these incidents (one linking the two men as late as November, 1937, the period covered by the second perjury indictment), Chambers recalled a four-hundred-dollar loan from the Hisses to help purchase a new car that he needed to break with the Communist party. Chambers first testified to this at Hiss's first trial, *after* the F.B.I. had sequestered Hiss's bank records showing a four-hundred-dollar withdrawal in November, 1937, four days prior to the car purchase. Mrs. Chambers had given Hiss's attorneys an entirely different version of the episode in November, 1948, in a pretrial deposition. She had stated that Chambers' mother, who helped them financially "at various times . . . probably gave us money for that [car]. . . ." Mrs. Chambers stuck to this account of the auto purchase when pressed by Hiss's counsel. Chambers himself, under cross-examination at the second trial, acknowledged that he had remembered the entire episode "when I was going over this whole history with the F.B.I. [in] . . . 1949."

One of Chambers' major difficulties in proving intimacy between the two families lay in finding witnesses who had observed the Hisses on any of the many days and evenings that Chambers and his wife claimed to have spent with them from 1935 to 1937. The Hisses' maids and family servants during this period denied familiarity with Chambers either as "Carl" or as "George Crosley," his pseudonyms, other than during the period when his family had occupied Hiss's abandoned apartment in 1935. Mrs. Chambers had earlier mentioned a maid named "Edith," and, at Hiss's second trial, an F.B.I. search produced a surprise prosecution witness named Edith Murray, who testified that she saw Mrs. Hiss *four* times and Hiss once at Chambers' apartment in 1935 and 1936. Mrs. Murray claimed to have recognized the Hisses only after being shown their photograph by the F.B.I., however, and she acknowledged under cross-examination that when first shown a snapshot of Mrs. Hiss, she had thought "it looks like someone that I know. It looked like—I thought maybe it was an actress or something."

The Hisses, for their part, refused to place on the stand the one person whom Whittaker and Esther Chambers claimed to have known during their various family visits, Timothy Hobson, Mrs. Hiss's son by a previous marriage. Hiss sheltered his stepson throughout two years of hearings and trials, perhaps needlessly, since Hobson denied Chambers' version of the family relationship both to the grand jury in 1948 and later to Hiss's appeal lawyers.

In 1948, Chambers offered the House committee a mountainous accumulation of details concerning this friendship, much of it inaccurate. But, according to later reminiscences of committee members McDowell, Mundt and Nixon, he established his credibility through a single extraordi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nary circumstance. Never in the investigation of espionage have so many placed so much reliance upon such an apparently minor fact, indeed upon a solitary twit of a bird, the prothonotary warbler. This became "the most widely publicized single piece of evidence linking Hiss and Chambers in a close relationship." When quizzed for details about Hiss, Chambers mentioned in an August 7 appearance before HUAC that the Hisses were bird watchers and "once they saw, to their great excitement, a prothonotary warbler," a rare specimen that Chambers, although also fond of birds, had never seen.

At a later committee meeting, Congressman John McDowell, himself an amateur ornithologist, casually asked Hiss about the subject, and Hiss mentioned the prothonotary warbler. McDowell later called it "a 'shot in the dark' that revealed that Hiss was perjuring himself," although, in retrospect, it seems doubtful that an enthusiast would have described his bird-watching triumphs only to partners in espionage or even only to close friends. Certainly one might share such a discovery with fellow enthusiasts, and, as the committee and public tended to forget, Chambers was also an amateur ornithologist.

The mass of detail offered by Chambers during the last five months of 1948, the clouded circumstances under which Hiss loaned his apartment and transferred his automobile in 1935, and the testimony of Edith Murray, confused but still relevant, all suggest a *degree* of intimacy between the couples, at least in 1935 and 1936. On the other hand, the false or irrelevant allegations in Chambers' version of his dealings with the Hisses cast doubt on his claim that the two families enjoyed a close friendship. Whittaker and Esther Chambers could not recall much about the inner workings of this friendship. They offered little information regarding conversations held, other than those concerning children and household problems, books read, opinions expressed, attitudes toward public issues, personal values and other subjects that close association between the two families might have reasonably exposed. If it existed, the friendship described by Chambers appears, on his own account, to have been a singularly barren one.

The evidence supporting Chambers' assertion that Hiss had been a Communist during the 1930s is also contradictory and far thinner than the proof of their personal involvement. The prosecution offered only one witness to substantiate Hiss's Communist membership, and as Earl Latham pointed out, "all the other testimony with the exception of the evidence of the typewriter being the otherwise unsupported assertion of Chambers." The lone supporting witness, Hede Massing, once a Communist agent, testified at the second trial that she and Hiss had argued genially at a 1935 party over rumors that Hiss was attempting to lure their host, State Department official Noel Field, from Mrs. Massing's party apparatus into his own. She called this her only contact with Hiss as a Communist. A defense witness immediately challenged her story, testifying to having met Mrs. Massing at a dinner party in September, 1949, at the home of Eugene Lyons, a prominent conservative journalist, where she told a different version of the Field episode, confessing that she had no actual proof, only a strong suspicion, that Hiss was a party member.

After the trials, two witnesses commented on Hiss's party membership. Lee Pressman testified before HUAC in 1950 that he had belonged to one of the New Deal Communist cells during the 1934-35 period in which Chambers claimed Hiss had belonged to the same group. Pressman named other members of the cell but made a special point of remarking that "for the period of my participation in the group . . . Alger Hiss was not a member. . . ." The other witness, Nathaniel Weyl, told the Senate Internal Security Committee in 1952, however, that Hiss belonged to Pressman's group in 1933 and 1934, although perhaps before Pressman himself joined the cell. Weyl's testimony, however, remains suspect. He withheld his comment on Hiss until two years after the trials, yet, during 1950-1952, Weyl published widely on the problem of internal subversion. One book, *Treason,* published in 1950 after Hiss's conviction, contained several sympathetic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

references to Hiss. Scholars convinced of Hiss's guilt have accepted the Massing and Weyl testimony as reliable, but it might be wise to treat all of these stories—Massing's, Pressman's and Weyl's—as unreliable hearsay and apochrypha.

Until Whittaker Chambers produced the Baltimore documents in November, 1948, and, a month later, added a cache of stolen microfilmed State Department papers, he had charged Hiss only with Communist party membership. By December, 1948, the statute of limitations precluded Hiss's trial for espionage, but the grand jury's perjury indictments that month implied this more serious accusation. Why had Chambers suddenly raised the new charge of espionage and produced corroborating evidence after having denied, almost to the day that he introduced the first batch of stolen documents on November 17, 1948, that Hiss had engaged in such acts? "Examine what motive he would have for lying [about this]," Prosecutor Thomas Murphy told the jury at Hiss's first trial, "and I daresay you will be convinced as I am that he is telling the truth and that what Mr. Hiss told the grand jury were lies." Actually, Chambers gave the House committee investigators and the New York grand jury several different reasons for having changed his story, three such versions in all. Chambers now testified that Hiss had been recruited for espionage by his Communist superior, a Russian agent named Colonel Bykov, beginning in the fall of 1937, a time which he later changed during the first trial to January, 1937.

Why did Chambers change his story? He himself offered a variety of accounts concerning this change of heart. He told Hiss's attorneys on November 17 that he had kept silent concerning the espionage through a feeling of compassion and a desire to avoid, if possible, the "human tragedy" that would afflict the Hisses because of his revelations. Thus, he had prayed that people such as the Hisses, even now, would repudiate communism as he had done, and he withheld his evidence as a gesture of support toward this goal. Chambers' sense of compassion proved frail and unreliable, however, on other, similar occasions.

The ex-Communist writer, Joseph Freeman, vividly described having undergone a loyalty screening conducted by Chambers at *Time* magazine in 1942, when Freeman was invited by Henry Luce to join its staff. Freeman, who had befriended Chambers fifteen years earlier, received rude handling from his former acquaintance and apparently flunked the screening, since he never received a post with the magazine. On another occasion, Chambers himself acknowledged the uneasy suspiciousness with which he approached fellow ex-Communists. In a November 17, 1948, deposition, Chambers mentioned an interview at his *Time* office in 1940, this time with the journalist Howard Rushmore. Rushmore was still a Communist at the time, he testified, and therefore Chambers had sent him packing, despite his request for help. In his posthumous collection of essays, *Cold Friday*, however, Chambers admitted that Rushmore had stated explicitly in his office that he had just broken with the party. Chambers' response, although understandable under the circumstances, hardly supports his later self-portrait in the Hiss case as a compassionate man of sorrows:

> That a man of whom I had never heard, a man a day or two out of the Communist Party, should know who I was and exactly where to find me, filled me with instant cold rage which is one of the forms that alarm takes. . . . I thought Rushmore was lying [and] . . . if not brusque, [I] was certainly chilling.

Although Chambers offered various conflicting versions during the Baltimore depositions of his efforts to rescue former Communist associates from the party after he defected, he was (by his own admission) strikingly harsh, suspicious and unforgiving in actual verified encounters with ex-Communists such as Rushmore and Freeman.

A second reason for exposing Hiss's espionage emerged in Chambers' private conversations with Nixon, HUAC counsel Robert Stripling, HUAC investigator Donald Appell and the authors Ralph de Toledano and Victor Lasky. To these men, Chambers expressed anger at his rough handling by Hiss's lawyers during the Baltimore depositions. Among other matters, they questioned him concerning any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

previous record of mental instability or alcoholism. Convinced that "Hiss was determined to destroy me—and my wife, if possible," Chambers claimed that he had retaliated with the documents. The *Time* editor emphasized particularly the aggressive cross-examination of his wife by Hiss's attorneys as the "incident [that] made his decision for him," according to both Nixon and Stripling. This is also questionable since Esther Chambers testified for the first time at the Baltimore hearing two days *after* Chambers went to New York and recovered his packet of documents. The sequence of events is crucial, however, since it supposedly helped persuade Nixon, Stripling and other committee members of Chambers' sincerity, despite his dramatic alteration of stories concerning Alger Hiss's Communist activities.

If compassion for the Hisses did not *stay* Chambers' hand, and anger at treatment of his wife did not *force* it, why did he finally produce the "pumpkin papers"? His own version of the episode in *Witness* seems more accurate. It does not mention his wife's harassment but stresses instead the pressure on him by Hiss's legal staff to corroborate his story with written evidence. There seemed a strong possibility, in fact, that the grand jury or the Justice Department, after Truman's re-election, would decide to prosecute Chambers, not Hiss, for perjury unless the former substantiated his charges. In November and December, 1948, Chambers appeared primarily concerned with preventing his own possible indictment.

The "Baltimore documents" submitted in November and the microfilmed "pumpkin papers," whatever Chambers' motives in producing them, proved decisive in securing Hiss's perjury conviction at his second trial. Prosecutor Thomas Murphy called them "immutable witnesses" (and therefore presumably unimpeachable). At neither trial did Hiss's attorneys question the assertion that the Baltimore documents had been typed on the Hisses' Woodstock machine. Nor did the defense challenge the single F.B.I. expert, Ramos Feehan, who testified at both trials that errors and similarities in typing on all but one of the Baltimore documents, when compared to samples of Mrs. Hiss's typing, established her Woodstock as their source. The defense did not even employ its own documents analyst at the trials, nor did it have experts examine the typewriter (number N230,099) in question.

Instead, Hiss's chief defense counsel—Lloyd Stryker at the first trial and Claude B. Cross at the second—argued at both trials that the Hisses had given the typewriter to their servants in 1937 *prior* to the period during which the documents were typed, January to April, 1938. The servants proved unreliable defense witnesses, since they testified to receiving the typewriter at different times from mid-1937 to mid-1938, and the prosecution pointed out that a repair shop to which they brought the Woodstock soon after receiving it had opened first in September, 1938.

The defense also argued that Hiss's attorneys, not Chambers, had submitted the documents to the Justice Department in November, 1948, and had even produced the Woodstock typewriter at the first trial after a long search, hardly the acts (they claimed) of a guilty person; that Chambers managed somehow to obtain the typewriter *after* the Hisses had given away the machine; that Chambers had somehow used the machine even while it remained in Hiss's possession but without the latter's knowledge; or that Chambers received the State Department documents from his other avowed sources within the government—Julian Wadleigh, Henry Collins and Harry Dexter White. This method of argument, called "alternative pleading" by the historian Earl Latham, was "the kind of argument that lawyers make when they do not have a case. The defendant was not there; but if he was there, he did not do it; but if he did it, he was insane; but if he was not insane, he had provocation."

Not until after Hiss's conviction did his attorneys begin questioning the authenticity of the Woodstock typewriter. This change in strategy appears to have originated with Hiss, whose last words before sentencing stated that "in the future the full facts of how Whittaker Chambers was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able to carry out forgery by typewriter will be disclosed." While preparing a motion for a new trial, Chester T. Lane, his new chief counsel, not only employed experts to examine the Baltimore documents but also hired Martin Tytell, a world authority on typewriter analysis, to construct a replica of the Woodstock. Although Judge Henry Goddard rejected the defense appeal for a new trial in 1952 based in large part on its contention that the Woodstock was a fabricated machine, not the typewriter that the Hisses had owned during the 1930s, controversy over possible "forgery by typewriter" in the case has persisted.

One could scarcely attempt an adequate summary of the major contentions of proponents and critics of the forgery theory in less than a volume. Hiss's experts claimed that spectroscopic and internal analysis of the Baltimore documents demonstrated, first, that they were the product of several different typists other than Mrs. Hiss and, secondly, that they could not have been kept for ten years in a dumbwaiter shaft package as Chambers had claimed. An intensive examination of the Woodstock machine produced at the trials also showed, according to these defense experts, that the machine was a fake, painstakingly constructed at some later date, and that the Baltimore documents themselves might not have been typed even on this fake machine. Government attorneys, on the other hand, asked how Chambers could have produced by himself in several months a phony typewriter and the entire array of doctored evidence when it had taken Hiss's experts, working full-time, more than twice as long to construct the typewriter alone. Arguments on both sides turned often on questions of intention and strategy: for example, *if* a fake had been produced to turn out the documents in question, why plant it deliberately where the defense might find (and presumably examine) it? Only a separate article could deal adequately with the range and ingenuity of "alternative pleading" on both sides. For those who possess both the stamina and interest to pursue this critical question, Fred J. Cook's *The Unfinished Story of Alger Hiss* and Meyer A. Zeligs' *Friendship and Fratricide* argue the forgery theory, and thoughtful rebuttals appear in Earl Latham's *The Communist Controversy in Washington* and Herbert L. Packer's *Ex-Communist Witnesses.*

Most Hiss supporters believe that the supposedly faked machine was constructed during the August-November, 1948, period, presumably with the assistance of the F.B.I. Although scholarly critics such as Herbert Packer and Earl Latham have ridiculed the notion that Chambers produced unaided both a phony typewriter and tainted documents in 1948, they generally avoid the more serious charge of F.B.I. complicity. Hiss's advocates have yet to discover any actual evidence of F.B.I. involvement with Chambers prior to Hiss's indictment, a task made even more difficult since the relevant F.B.I. files on the case have been closed to all but the friendliest investigators and writers. Therefore, the Hiss forces have concentrated not on proving without evidence that the F.B.I. built a fake Woodstock typewriter—although fabricating duplicate machines had become standard procedure in the repertoire of espionage agencies by the time of the Second World War—but upon showing that the F.B.I. had *possession* of the original Woodstock before Hiss's attorneys found N230,099 or were led to it. Proving this would not demonstrate, by itself, that the F.B.I. actually provided the evidence to substantiate Chambers' story, but it would indicate that the bureau *could* have done so, a charge it has denied completely.

Curiously, the defense, with little outside help, located the Woodstock before the first trial, after thirty of the two hundred and sixty-three F.B.I. agents working on the case, assigned solely to locate that missing machine, had failed to turn it up. Even more strangely, the F.B.I. then declined a defense offer to inspect the machine, despite the supposed six-month search for it by two dozen agents. The defense initially neglected these facts, although the New York *Times* and other newspapers had published reports in December, 1948, that the F.B.I. and HUAC investigators had already found the machine.

Although Hiss's advocates have recently

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stressed these and similar reports, their curiosity becomes more intelligible when we consider the remarkably authoritative collection of commentators who have praised the F.B.I. for locating the Woodstock. They include two members of the House committee, John McDowell and Richard Nixon, who described the incident in his memoirs, *Six Crises*, but later attributed the comment to what he termed a "researcher's error"; an official 1951 HUAC report on Soviet espionage in the United States; and, according to the Hiss defense, the manager of the Woodstock factory, who reportedly told a defense investigator that his company had "helped the F.B.I. find the typewriter in the Hiss case."

The most intriguing of all the stories concerning F.B.I. complicity, however, comes from an *American Weekly* article by Win Brooks written in 1950, entitled "How the F.B.I. Trapped Hiss," which Richard Nixon inserted into the *Congressional Record* as an appendix to his own speech on the subject. Brooks claimed to have discussed the case with J. Edgar Hoover, who provided him with a "14-page condensation" based upon correlating the reports of all F.B.I. agents engaged particularly in the hunt for Chambers' missing maid, Edith Murray. Brooks then visited prosecutor Thomas Murphy and examined the government's records while preparing his article, thereby suggesting less hyperbole than usual for such writers when he called his account "the complete, official story." Brooks stated flatly that the F.B.I. had found the typewriter, although his article dealt primarily with the bureau's work in locating Mrs. Murray. Only if F.B.I. files on the case become available in the near future to *all* investigators can we determine the actual extent of F.B.I. involvement in any "forgery by typewriter."

Not only did Hiss's attorneys fail to confront this supposed forgery at the trials; they also neglected to scrutinize carefully the stolen microfilm upon which the government based so much of its case. There are several remarkable accounts—notably by Nixon, HUAC investigator Stripling and Chambers—of how HUAC, having obtained the microfilm, sent a portion for testing to the manufacturer, Eastman Kodak, only to be informed at first that the film had been produced *after* 1946. A recheck by the company brought word an hour later that film possessing those code marks had also been manufactured in 1937. In the case of that portion of the film produced by the DuPont Company, microfilm using the code markings in question had also been manufactured both in 1936 and 1944. The House committee never mentioned this earlier embarrassing mixup when it called the Eastman Kodak representative as a witness in December, 1948.

Hiss's attorneys did attempt to shift blame for theft of many of the State Department documents onto another official, Henry Julian Wadleigh, who admitted having passed hundreds of such papers to Whittaker Chambers in 1937 and 1938. The major difficulty with defense efforts to implicate Wadleigh was that he had been posted to a foreign assignment in March, 1938, and therefore could not have stolen the final month's quantity of material, whatever his involvement with earlier papers.

Wadleigh admitted, however, that he probably accounted for some but not all of the purloined documents. What, then, are we to make of Chambers' claim that he received the classified materials primarily from *one man*, Alger Hiss, at a time when he acknowledged receiving regular deliveries of stolen documents from another handful of hidden Communists, Wadleigh among them? Although he described these documents as "lifesavers" aimed at forestalling Communist attempts on his life, Chambers apparently did not feel impelled to "protect" himself against Henry Julian Wadleigh, or Henry Collins, or "Abel Gross" or any of his other alleged government sources, or against the more ominous retribution of his superiors in the Communist underground, none of whose writings occupied even a solitary page of the "pumpkin papers."

Chambers accused Hiss of espionage on one occasion prior to 1937, when Hiss allegedly became a full-time spy. The facts connected with that earlier charge bear importantly, as critics such as Lord Jowitt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have already pointed out, on Chambers' general credibility. On that occasion, according to Chambers, Hiss volunteered to obtain and steal confidential State Department documents dealing with the Nye committee's investigation of munitions industries during the First World War. Hiss served as counsel to the Nye committee in 1935 and, Chambers insisted, stole a number of papers dealing with "some phase of the munitions traffic," documents that Chambers' Communist superiors later judged worthless.

Hiss's version of the episode, however, was substantiated entirely by the State Department official who handled the transfer of documents to the Nye committee. None of the thousands of State Department papers provided the committee, it should be noted, were considered secret, and all of them were published either in daily press releases or in the committee's final report. Also, at no time had Hiss personally requested any documents from the State Department. With the committee's approval, on the other hand, he did provide interested journalists with all available documentary material, and this was the period during which Hiss claimed to have met Chambers as "George Crosley," a writer seeking stories concerning the Nye committee's work. At the trials and in his memoir, Chambers also claimed that Hiss had photographed the stolen documents himself in his own home, while Chambers served only as a courier to the Communist party. Earlier, however, Chambers had sworn that he photographed the documents himself using his own equipment at the Washington home of two former radical friends. Lord Jowitt and other critics failed to detect this final contradiction in the curious Nye committee incident.

Chambers based his credibility at both trials ultimately upon the documentary evidence of Hiss's guilt, those "immutable witnesses," the microfilm and Baltimore documents but particularly the latter, supposedly typed on the Hiss Woodstock. The Baltimore papers date from January 1 to April 1, 1938, and were said to include the last batch of material Chambers received from Hiss prior to his break with the party. This occurred, he said, within two or three weeks *after* receiving these last documents or, according to Chambers' testimony at the trials, on April 15, 1938. On that day, he moved his family from its Mount Royal Terrace apartment in Baltimore to another secret home just outside the city on Old Court Road. He ceased immediately all further contact with his Communist spymasters and, by his own account, went underground to hide from the "underground." The dates involved are important because if Chambers had actually broken with the party at some point prior to April, 1938, he could not possibly have received the final batch of typed documents from Hiss, and the supposedly "immutable witnesses" might suddenly begin to scream "fake." Chambers insisted that he broke with the party and disappeared simultaneously, but if he broke earlier than April, 1938, he would have been in hiding during the period covered by the final run of Baltimore documents, a fact easily as "immutable" as the documents themselves.

Until Chambers produced the Baltimore papers in November, 1948, however, he gave an entirely different version of his flight from the Communist underground, and only *after* Hiss's indictment, at another session with the accused man's lawyers in February, 1949, did Chambers finally alter his story to conform with the dates on the Baltimore documents.

Much evidence suggests that Chambers stopped his activities as a Communist agent sometime during February or March, 1938, although Chambers himself had insisted in almost every discussion of the question prior to November, 1948, that he had broken as early as 1937. Probably Chambers claimed this earlier break, especially during the late thirties, in order to establish more firmly his credentials as an ex-Communist, since most of the available evidence indicates that he left the party only in the first two months of 1938.

Chambers wavered on the break-date throughout his interrogation by HUAC and by Hiss's attorneys in the months from August to November, 1948, sometimes stating 1937 and on occasions February or March, 1938. On other aspects of the break,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was extremely precise, as in this exchange with Hiss's lawyers on November 5:

Q. Now, how long did you stay at Mt. Royal Terrace?

A. I should think we stayed there until February or March of 1938.

Q. February or March of '38. And what then?

A. Then we moved to the Old Court Road. . . .

Q. In other words, as I now understand it, on the day that you moved from Mt. Royal Terrace, you ceased to go to Washington and perform the duties that you previously had been performing in connection with the Party?

A. That is correct.

Q. And thereafter you did not get in touch with Peters [his Communist superior]?

A. That is correct. . . .

By February, 1949, after the indictment, Chambers had shifted to his April 15, 1938, break-date and thereafter maintained that version. From the beginning, however, Chambers insisted that he had stopped collecting typed documents and microfilm "within two or three weeks before I broke." This would just barely allow for inclusion of the late March and April 1 Baltimore documents, had Chambers broken on April 15, but had he left the party earlier, this would have prevented him from having collected practically all of the February-April, 1938, documents upon which the government based much of its prejury case against Hiss.

Mrs. Chambers' testimony on the break followed substantially that of her husband. She shifted from elaborate and sometimes confused recollections of a January to March, 1938, date during her 1948 appearances as a witness to an equally precise insistence on an April 15 break when she took the stand at Hiss's trials. Mrs. Chambers' earlier testimony remains particularly interesting in two respects. First, she corroborated a January to March, 1938, break in her Baltimore deposition on the same day, November 17, 1948, that Chambers introduced the typed State Department documents that dated through April 1, 1938. Second, she remembered having remained in hiding at Old Court Road for several months after their break—"no longer than three months"—before going to Florida, a trip that Chambers himself (supported by letters written at the time) acknowledged had taken place in May, 1938.

Chambers also confirmed a mid-February date in testimony before HUAC on August 30, 1948, when the following exchange occurred with Richard Nixon:

MR. NIXON. After you left the job [for the National Research Project], what happened then? Did you leave the party immediately?

MR. CHAMBERS. I think there may have been 2 or 3 weeks in between. I have no longer a recollection, but I left very shortly thereafter.

MR. NIXON. In other words, you severed your relationship with the party completely a few weeks afterwards?

MR. CHAMBERS. I disappeared.

The National Research Project furloughed Whittaker Chambers on January 31, 1938, but after producing the Baltimore documents, Chambers changed this period from two weeks to "at least" two *months*. Julian Wadleigh later testified that he had been unable to contact Chambers in late February and early March, 1938, to inform his superior of Wadleigh's imminent departure for Turkey on March 11, thereby providing the only corroboration by any of Chambers' Communist associates for either version of the defection.

Persuasive documentary support for the belief that Chambers broke with the Communist party sometime in February, 1938, comes from the files of Oxford University Press, evidence that figured in Alger Hiss's unsuccessful 1952 appeal for a new trial. Chambers remembered having obtained a translating job through a New York literary agent in mid-April, 1938, *after* his break, and the trip to Florida in May was to allow uninterrupted work on this project. Actually, the agent in question, Paul Willert, had secured *two* translations for Chambers in 1938, not *one*, although ten years later, the *Time* editor mingled his recollections of the separate commissions. The first was a translation of Martin Gumpert's Oxford book, *Dunant, The Story of the Red Cross*, and the second, a Longmans-Green publication, was Gustav Regler's novel, *The Great Crusade*. Chambers remembered traveling to Florida with his family in May, 1938, to work on the Regler translation,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but he was actually commissioned for that job by Longmans-Green in *June, 1938, after* his return from Florida. Correspondence between Chambers and the publisher establish this sequence beyond question.

Chambers received the *Dunant* translation, on the other hand, "at the end of 1937 or at the very beginning of 1938," according to a deposition made by Willert to Hiss's attorneys. The Oxford files reveal only that Chambers had already begun working on that translation by March, 1938, although perhaps even earlier. An Oxford Press shipping form on March 18, for example, records a package of manuscript having been shipped to "David Chambers, 2124 Mt. Royal Terrace." In any event, on May 1, Chambers sent Willert the first hundred pages of completed translation from "General Delivery, St. Augustine, Florida," indicating that he had arrived in the state at the latest by sometime in late April. In another letter to Willert dated May 3, Chambers stated flatly that he had "not been at Mt. Royal Terrace for more than a month."

Other curious evidence verifies the fact that Chambers broke with the Communist party in February or March, not April, 1938. First, he advertised the Mount Royal Terrace apartment for sublet in the February 27 Baltimore *Sun* and subsequently rented the apartment as of March 14. Second, the Chamberses apparently withdrew their daughter from a Baltimore day school sometime in March, presumably to share their secret vigil on Old Court Road. The exact circumstances surrounding his break remain puzzling, however, and will probably never be fully known. For one thing, throughout 1938, although presumably in hiding and fearing for his life, he continued using his abandoned Mount Royal Terrace apartment as a mail drop for manuscripts and publishers' checks, despite having moved out in February or March. There exists abundant evidence, then, that Whittaker Chambers broke decisively with the party's underground sometime during those two months and immediately took up both secret residence and a new career as a translator.

Thus, *two* sets of "immutable witnesses" appear in the Hiss case. The first involves Chambers' break with communism sometime *before* mid-March, 1938; the second, a collection of State Department documents allegedly stolen by Hiss but dating through *April* 1, 1938. The discrepancy between these two facts, until satisfactorily resolved, remains the episode's central mystery.

But those who argue Hiss's innocence face serious difficulties. They have yet to construct a thoroughly plausible explanation of how Chambers managed to obtain the microfilm and, particularly, the State Department documents typed on a Woodstock that either belonged to the Hisses or was an almost exact copy of their machine. The "forgery by typewriter" theory remains a hypothesis until more substantial evidence links Chambers clearly to some larger scheme to destroy Alger Hiss. Even if one granted, for the sake of argument, the premise that the F.B.I. possessed the disputed Woodstock between August and December, 1948, it would still be necessary to demonstrate that the bureau manufactured the evidence with Chambers' cooperation. Hiss's advocates, furthermore, must still construct some plausible reason to explain why Chambers lied *if* in fact he *did* lie, about his intimate friendship with the Hisses. Why did Chambers single out Alger Hiss, among his ex-Communist associates, for such treatment? The question of motivation remains basic to a full understanding of the case.

Many ingenious commentators have volunteered for the dubious privilege of "psyching out" Hiss and Chambers since 1948, and efforts to analyze the pair became a popular parlor game even at the time of the case itself. During the trials, the Hiss defense shuffled through a variety of tawdry rumors that purported to "explain" Chambers' attack on Hiss. Ultimately, they rejected the darker unproved tales of sexual abnormality, alcoholism and plain lunacy in favor of an elaborate and somewhat Gothic tale of family instability, suicidal tendencies and paranoid revenge. In this version, Chambers had schemed his revenge against Hiss since the 1930s from the time that the latter had rejected his overtures to friendship. Hiss's attorneys tried to support

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their assertions by spreading over the trial record a detailed account of Chambers' alleged psychopathology: his dreary family and personal background; his acknowledged history of bearing false witness about himself and others throughout the 1920s and 1930s, both inside and out of the Communist party; and his translation of a Franz Werfel novel, *Class Reunion,* which detailed the destruction of one friend by another in a manner that resembled somewhat the Hiss-Chambers relationship. They even summoned psychiatrists who testified to Chambers' allegedly paranoid tendencies, although none of the learned analysts had ever examined Chambers personally.

The prosecution ridiculed these maneuvers, apparently quite effectively as far as the jury was concerned, but the psychoanalytic theories themselves have lingered on in pro-Hiss accounts of the case. They received elaborate restatement in 1967 in a purportedly "objective psychobiography" by Meyer Zeligs, whose research methods and conclusions—all sympathetic to Hiss—stand open for inspection in his book, *Friendship and Fratricide: An Analysis of Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss.* Caustic and compelling critical reviews of the book by Sydney Hook, Meyer Schapiro and Walter Goodman also deserve attention. Goodman's book on the House Committee on Un-American Activities, on the other hand, pretends to "explain" Hiss simply as an ambitious liar fighting to salvage his career, and Murray Kempton's earlier essay on the case (which also accepted Hiss's guilt) offers a "status loss" analysis based upon the defendant's origins in the faded world of Baltimore gentility. Unfortunately, Hiss has provided scholars with little personal material upon which to base such speculation while Chambers lies concealed beneath a superabundance of often contradictory autobiographical and biographical narrative. Richard Rovere once expressed the hope that since no fully comprehensible human being emerged from Hiss's book on the case, a novelist like Robert Penn Warren might "reflect on this and see if he can bring Alger Hiss to life." I share the hope and would add only that it holds true as well for Whittaker Chambers' self-portrait in *Witness* and for every subsequent psychological analysis of the two men.

Almost all conclusions at this stage must obviously remain cautious and tentative, but on the basis of the evidence presented by Whittaker Chambers, there appears to be reasonable doubt that Alger Hiss was a member of the Communist party at the time when they knew one another. Furthermore, reasonable doubt also exists, especially in the light of Chambers' February or March, 1938, break with the party, that Hiss stole government documents dating through April, 1938. On the other hand, Hiss's *personal* ties with Chambers seem to have been closer than the former State Department official ever acknowledged. Moreover, Hiss's complete vindication must await some plausible alternative explanation of the Woodstock documents and their origins. From my own preliminary look at the existing records and studies, I concluded that although Hiss's *guilt* seems to me still unproved beyond a reasonable doubt, it would be equally difficult, in the light of available evidence, to *prove* him innocent. For the "bitter irony of Hiss's position," as Robert Bendiner pointed out at the time of the trials, "is that acquittal is not enough; he must have vindication." And no comparatively impartial observer can consider him vindicated at this stage of the inquiry.

Perhaps only a master novelist can bridge our present impasse, but the historian still must attempt to establish the facts where possible and, where not, to expose the inconsistencies of partisan accounts. The time has come for a thoroughly researched reassessment of the Hiss case, but, without the release of the grand jury records, the executive files of HUAC and the relevant F.B.I. records, the "complete" story of that controversial affair may never be known. Granting the episode's pivotal importance in the political life of recent America, however, historians must begin to confront the case itself to prevent either of its partisan versions from hardening into myth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Place to Live in

JOHN HAY

Nothing is merciful—
not even you, Oh Lord,
whom we have mercilessly
forsaken.
The autumn underfoot
smells sweet of pine;
blue wind socks through
the hemlocks;
robins swoop in,
to swap stands in the trees.
The skies labor
with heavy planes
and piles of clouds.
Whetting a knife,
rocking a scythe,
poor man, rich thief,
gone, yet here the same,
still hanging on
in us, and merciless;
because we thought,
because we acted,
because we traded in
our love
unknowingly,
because we used the living
for our lives,
burning with hope
and cruelty;
while the earth rolled over,
roaring, soothing itself,
mindless in its pain.

✪ JOHN HAY has written a number of books, one of poetry, *A Private History,* and others on the subject of the natural world, including *The Run, Nature's Year* and *The Great Beach.* His latest book is *In Defense of Nature.* He is president of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and chairman of the Brewster Conservation Commission.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Love Stories

CHARLES THOMAS SAMUELS

Since film producers are only slightly more original than makers of cars, the success of *Love Story* seemed likely to inspire a line of identically tooled tearjerkers. Films about love currently on view, however, suggest that Segal's concoction is like the convertible: an item that won't survive today's polluted atmosphere. Any director seasoned enough to be able to work without interference knows that if he wants to put his audience into contact with reality, he must find vehicles that aren't so fragile, so vulnerable to turbulence or dirt. Therefore, in varying ways, Ingmar Bergman (*The Touch*), Mike Nichols (*Carnal Knowledge*), John Schlesinger (*Sunday Bloody Sunday*) and Jerzy Skolimowski (*Deep End*) try to look candidly at love. Their films are more realistic and harsher than *Love Story*, but only the last of them escapes a different kind of distortion.

Because Bergman is a great artist, the saddest example of falsity is his. The master, however, hasn't lost his touch; he has simply chosen to mix his characteristic bleakness into a vat of suds. Varying an old formula (lady and demon lover), he brings into his heroine's blond, blue-eyed family and *House & Garden* life, a darkly hirsute neurotic. While constructing the early stages of their affair, Bergman gives frequent demonstrations of cinematic brilliance. For example, we see the need that drives Karin to David without being told about it. A quick succession of her domestic duties and pleasures transpires amidst sunshine, joviality and music. Abruptly, all sound and action cease; then a long shot shows Karin alone in her kitchen, contrasting this moment of isolating aimlessness with the bustle of what came before.

The great Bibi Andersson makes Karin sympathetic as well as comprehensible, but even she cannot win us over to Elliott Gould. Playing David as more nearly a mental defective than a neurotic—looking bewildered when he is supposed to be happy, and stupefied when he is meant to be plaintive—Gould makes even less agreeable a character conceived as pathologically selfish and immature. Accordingly, when Bergman suggests that David is admirable simply by virtue of being intense, the film is ruined.

The ruin is gradual, rotting the nicely observed domestic drama from within, the way termites destroy a wooden madonna in the church where the lovers often meet. The madonna is the film's obtrusive symbol, sole reason for making David an archaeologist (he unearths it) and prime occasion for the statement of Bergman's theme. David tells his lover that the termites are at least as beautiful as the image of serene femininity they are destroying, and the film labors to suggest, as Karin herself asserts, that David is life-enhancing. Thus Bergman fills the sound track with church bells, choristers, and the Chopinesque music that, in movies, tends to accompany only the highest sort of fornication. Yet the action, as opposed to rhetorical and aural fretwork, indicates that Karin was both a richer and a happier person without him.

The implication that David's nuttiness is superior to bourgeois normality reveals the underside of Bergman's tragic sense: a delight in suffering because it is colorful as drama. *The Touch* unconsciously paro-

✪ CHARLES THOMAS SAMUELS, the SCHOLAR's film columnist, is the author of *John Updike, A Casebook on Film* and, most recently, *The Ambiguity of Henry James.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dies this whoring after pain in a scene when Karin reacts to David's temporary departure by pressing her naked palm onto the shards of a broken glass. At this moment, like David himself, the film becomes attitudinizing. Although much less showy, Karin and her husband are manifestly deeper and more fully human. To do anything but pity the tormented lover is a form of inverted romanticism, not far enough from *Love Story* to be art.

Still, Bergman knows how to hold an audience—through means clearly understood by Mike Nichols. By borrowing the Swedish director's "chamber film" style, with its relentless close-ups and commentative backgrounds, *Carnal Knowledge* achieves an intensity that would otherwise not be earned by its rather simple-minded script. Such extreme concentration has been widely criticized because, in this case, our noses are rubbed into nothing but sex. Since the characters are obsessional, however, the method seems appropriate. No one finds narrowness intrinsically objectionable in, say, Strindberg's plays, which the film also resembles in misogyny. Narrowness itself is not the film's crucial defect.

Although *Carnal Knowledge* imitates Bergman's textual austerity, it is the product of entertainers rather than artists. The value of the film lies in the portrayal of Jonathan, a case study in sexual dysfunction, but Nichols and scenarist Jules Feiffer don't risk concentrating on anything so dourly narrow. Jonathan's friend Sandy extends their portrayal of masculinity, although he is less a character than a machine for the production of gags. At his first appearance, Sandy is a lampoon of pretentious sensitivity who talks in the clichés of a Nichols-May routine. Even when he is older and presumably suffering, he is only a farceur. His personality must be altered, however, when Feiffer wants to bring the house down. When Sandy confesses his marital frustration to Jonathan, for example, he makes a joke that could never come from a man who is otherwise helplessly naïve and earnest ("[We] do all the right things. We spend fifteen minutes on foreplay. We . . . do it in different rooms. It's a seven-room house"). Sandy not only trivializes Jonathan's story; by providing so blatant a complement to the other man, he implies that the film (like its title) means to make some generalization about sex. The film's detractors, however, are clearly correct when they argue that its data are insufficient both in quantity and in contextual relationships to evoke anything but a callow sourness. If the film focused more narrowly on Jonathan, this sourness would more obviously be a reflection of his malady. Then *Carnal Knowledge* could not be accused of pretentiousness but would bear scrutiny as the tragicomic exposure of a congealed romantic.

From the opening credits, when both men are heard as disembodied voices, Jonathan represents a classic inability to mate sex and love. After discovering that Sandy has "scored" with a coed, opportunism drives him to conquer her in a way that blocks an equally desired assent. He cannot get Susan to love as well as desire him, so, in obvious pain, he pushes her into marriage with his duller friend. Thereafter, he moves from woman to woman, hating and fearing each for her inability to fulfill his conflicting drives and ensuring, by his neurotic behavior, a failure of both heart and organ. Insofar as the film traces this process, it is accurate and, in a long fight between Jonathan and his mistress, moving. Insofar as it shares in Jonathan's attitude, it is, like *The Touch,* little more than an inverted *Love Story* ("love is [*always*] having to say you're sorry"). Unlike *The Touch,* however, it doesn't glamorize neurosis, and if it inspects only a small sexual problem—and that with many compromises—it pushes mass movies a step further toward honest confrontation with the peculiarities of libido.

In one way, the English film *Sunday Bloody Sunday* does the same thing by inspecting the simultaneous love affairs of a man and a woman with a young male sculptor. Penelope Gilliatt's script, directed with untypical restraint by John Schlesinger, exhibits these unorthodox couplings but refuses to shock us about them. The man is compassionate, orderly, a doctor, cultivated in taste and—for the last ounce of sympathy—Jewish (thus susceptible to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well-meaning aunts with nice girls in tow). The woman is not a good housekeeper, although she makes up for this defect with wit, intelligence and tough openness. Most surprising of all, the sculptor is neither opportunistic nor perverse but rather loving, kind to kids, and guilelessly enthusiastic about his trendy assemblages and their chance for success in America. He engages in equally graphic lovemaking with each partner, but the staging is studiously matter-of-fact. Hands on his back, the camera argues, are simply hands without gender. We are asked to take the bisexuality, so to speak, in stride.

The title promises gore, but the slang "bloody" merely points to the disagreeableness of a lonely holiday and thus to the motivation behind the triangle. The idea that one must take love where one finds it, however, is a piece of wisdom too feeble or dubious to serve as climax for a two-hour film. Moreover, there is something smug about the attempt of Gilliatt and Schlesinger to win high marks simply for being above moral censure—and worse than smug because they are also above drama or comprehension. Beyond showing that he is young and pleasant, their film never reveals why the sculptor should inspire so much loyal and undemanding love, or why he should want to switch-hit. The filmmakers fill up the background with zonked hippies, crisis reports on the radio and in the newspapers, examples of people living lives of strenuous modernity, but only as authenticating decor. Since one gains no increment in understanding from the film, one enjoys mostly the cleverness with which it seduces our attention: through an elliptical opening, scenes that promise but always forestall an explosion, printed titles of days, which imply that something will happen if only we stick it out till "Sunday." Doubtless some rather decent people lead private lives as officially perverse yet actually civilized as the people in this film. In refusing to do anything but show that queers and fornicators can be nice chaps, however, *Sunday Bloody Sunday* is no more interesting than the genial young sculptor whose promiscuous kindness has the weight and meaning of a light breeze.

All of these films have incidental felicities that I can do no more than mention: *The Touch*'s brilliant color photography, its performances by Andersson and Max von Sydow, its occasional moments of authentic feeling; the relationship between Jonathan and Bobbie in *Carnal Knowledge* and Ann-Margret's enactment of the latter's fearful sensuality; Glenda Jackson in *Sunday Bloody Sunday* and the cunning ease with which the film moves along. But each seems important primarily for expanding audience toleration. The "sensitive" subject of *Sunday,* the obscene language of *Knowledge,* the eloquent nudity of *The Touch* seem each to have exhausted its creators' courage, imagination or understanding. But audiences must be prepared for such things if deeper explorations are to be possible, because in film expense makes art the servant of audience receptivity. Ingmar Bergman is normally above such considerations, but his English-language *The Touch* does not seem to have been conceived for his normal viewers—thus the primer-like symbolism and psychology, the unwonted clarity in handling of time and space.

To the masses, Jerzy Skolimowski remains caviar, although heretofore rather spoiled and secondhand. Therefore, his is the only one of these films that we can like without having to show how it tends to mature the *hoi polloi.* Although it deals with love, *Deep End* does not analyze the subject. Intellectually, it is even thinner than *Sunday Bloody Sunday;* but Schlesinger's film presents documentation in excess of its significance, whereas Skolimowski's is a work of disinterested creativity, free from any moral or social intention. As its title indicates, it merely seeks to plumb the depths of an emotion; it doesn't show how love operates in the world or try to evoke some attitude toward it but attempts simply to create a powerful image of love's imperious force.

The setting, real enough to suit the medium of film, was clearly selected for expressionistic possibilities. *Deep End* takes place in a public bathhouse to which people go ostensibly in search of cleanliness and, since it includes a pool, of sport, but ac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tually to indulge in libidinous rites. Into this literally steamy environment comes a fifteen-year-old boy who had dropped out of school at Christmastime in order to make his way in the world. As he is taken to the room where he will don his attendant's uniform, he expresses his wonderment that the baths aren't all white, thus symbolizing a different set of discoveries that awaits him.

Chief among these is a slightly older female attendant for whom he promptly feels a "crush." The girl tries to sophisticate this pilgrim progressing toward maturity by suggesting that, "without really doing anything," he can extort large tips from the customers. And after a traumatic encounter with a porcine blonde, Mike does learn to give service without giving himself. Self he wishes to save for his female colleague.

With youthful innocence, he romanticizes the girl, all the while suppressing his own sexual desires. Skolimowski's brilliance at visualizing the deep end of the psyche is perhaps most obvious at such moments in the film: for example, a scene in which some youths make dirty remarks as Susan sits near the pool. Mike upholds her virtue by attempting to knock the toughs down; yet they are only voicing what he fears to acknowledge, as we see when the scuffle lands him in deep water. Through an adroit piece of editing, Skolimowski turns the fisticuffs into a moment of imagined copulation between Mike and Susan.

Since she is old enough to have entered a world of casual or even sordid sexuality, Susan is charmed by the boy's innocent fervor, although she is beyond feeling much more than amusement. To increase her fun, she continuously humiliates him, playing on the inner conflict between innocence and lust. When Mike sneaks into an adults-only movie theater so that he can stroke her arm while she sits next to her fiancé, she slyly contrives to have him arrested for public lewdness. There now ensues not only an inner conflict in the hero but a battle with Susan for some sign of serious attention.

Susan, however, takes nothing seriously. Engaged to be married, she nonetheless dallies with a teacher who periodically appears at the baths squiring a gym class of schoolgirls. As she later reveals when haranguing him, the teacher professionally despoils youth, exploiting his position to obtain the pleasure that he apparently lacks in his marriage. When Mike discovers their affair, he tries to stop it, but he is childish and thus ineffective. He punctures some tires on the teacher's car, but this merely earns him a sound beating. In the course of her struggle with him, however, Susan loses the diamond from her engagement ring, and this brings about Skolimowski's shocking finale.

That the diamond is her fiancé's principal claim on her nicely measures the depths of worldly love in this film. But Mike's feeling is considerably deeper. In order to express it, he tries to retrieve the gem through a plan that is both boyishly resourceful and quixotic. Since their fight took place in the snow, the stone is invisible. Therefore, Mike suggests that they shovel the snow into plastic bags, take it to the baths, which are emptied for the holiday, and, by melting it down, disclose the diamond. This scene, both comic and improbable, leaves the viewer entirely unprepared for the climax.

After being interrupted by a call from her fiancé, Susan returns to the empty pool, where she finds Mike lying naked on the floor, the diamond in his mouth. After forcing him to return it, Susan satisfies his desire in a unique moment of compassion (or is it indifferent sensuality?). The miracle of this scene is the suggestiveness of events that first strike us as merely wacky, for the snow corresponds to whatever coldness in Susan is capable of being dissipated and the diamond is an apt symbol for both the preciousness to Mike of her love and its limited, materialistic nature—which he soon discovers. Nothing so well demonstrates Skolimowski's clever blending of the actual and the figurative as the moment when, to keep the diamond from being lost on the white pool floor, as it was lost in the snow, Mike suggests that the water be poured through a sieve made of Susan's tights. But even more brilliant objectification of feeling lies ahead.

Since the lovemaking is finished and the pool is filling up for the next day, Susan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prepares to go about her business. But Mike cannot understand that she can give herself so casually and simply leave. When she denies the act's importance by refusing his importunity and climbing out of the pool, he sends in the direction of her head the heavy steel lamp that they had used to melt the snow. A look of utter amazement breaks out on Susan's face—and on ours. Then the lamp is hurled again. Still wearing the smile of her astonishment, Susan falls into the water, as Mike goes toward her to roll over and over again in a bloody embrace on which the film very gradually fades out. As the teacher had said at the conclusion of Susan's harangue, "that's what you get for messing with kids."

Unlike the other films, which either repeat or dissipate their psychological perceptions, *Deep End*'s meaning is absolutely coterminus with its form. Only at the last shocking moment do we realize that Mike's love had always been implicitly lethal in its purity and fervor. Too young to adjust to the compromises and opportunism of adult sex, which are represented throughout the film, Mike feels with a ruthlessness that the end allows to surface. Susan could easily flit about "without really doing anything," for she no longer feels love with the intensity experienced by a fifteen-year-old. Thus she must fall victim to a passion she cannot even comprehend.

It would be foolish, however, to take *Deep End* as anything more than a hyperbolic representation of adolescent sexuality. The style of the film lays no claim to verisimilitude but only to effect. It doesn't mean to instruct but only to shock us, and this it does.

It does not amuse, however, despite Skolimowski's clear design that we laugh at Mike's maladroitness so as to be more horrified by the murder, and despite the widespread critical willingness to call *Deep End* a "black comedy." Most of the film's failures stem from its attempts at humor. A particularly bad example is the sequence in Soho, where Mike goes in pursuit of Susan and her fiancé. To assuage at least one of his hungers and to waste time, Mike buys a hot dog from an Oriental vendor who exhibits the punctilios of a tea ceremony. The gag is tonally wrong for the film, yet Skolimowski keeps repeating it. Incidental details, like a whore professionally troubled by a leg cast or a man revolving in the pool while riding a kayak, are absurd only in the noncomic meaning of the term. John Moulder-Brown has exactly the right looks for Mike, but he is incapable of suggesting the depth of passion beneath Mike's beardless exterior. The film strives for an adolescent charm that would further exacerbate our response to the last scene, but, as always, Skolimowski shows himself a poor imitator of Truffaut.

After these and other flaws are acknowledged, *Deep End* remains an original and artistically inventive film. If it showed nothing more than how to produce an inevitable surprise it would belong to the artistic annals of successful audacity. The innocence of Mike's crush, the film's light if insufficiently humorous atmosphere, the high-spiritedness of the direction, the brilliantly economical use of a rock score, Jane Asher's daunting self-possession in the role of Susan—all these contrive to make us regard Mike no more seriously than the girl does. Yet, when we look back, we see how carefully we have been programmed to expect the murder. Under the credits a drop of blood flows through a tube, and the baths are being painted red throughout the film: ocular preparation, as it were, for the climax. More important are the instances of foreshadowing, as when in an attempt to foil Susan and the teacher while they are making love, Mike can find no other recourse than the fire alarm, which he smashes with his fist, thereby rousing the bathhouse but also bloodying his hand. Not only is there a dream copulation in the pool fight but a disturbing moment in which Mike literally dives into the girl's photographed surrogate.

Through action and decor, *Deep End* usually controls our feelings, whereas the other films talk and talk earnestly, failing to engage us and still not demonstrating much in the way of wisdom. From art, we expect wisdom as well as skill; but in an art form like film that so rarely exhibits either, when the meaning is neither false nor inconsequential, skill means a lot.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter from Europe

ANTHONY BURGESS

It is delightful to be able to abandon Pickwickianism and casuistry and affirm (the franked envelope is on view at the SCHOLAR offices) that this heading is, after my exile, literally true once more. I am in Europe and I am writing a letter, vainly seeking verbal inspiration in Lake Bracciano and, very clear in this Sunday afternoon sun, the crammed little townships of Trevignano and Anguillara on the further shores, my house being in Bracciano itself, a fifteenth-century structure—probably originally a scullion's hovel or nest for a cast-off mistress—at the foot of the castle. It is the castle of the Orsini family, and Shakespeare scholars will remember that it was the handsome young Orsini who attended the first night of *Twelfth Night* at Elizabeth's court, Shakespeare making graceful acknowledgment of his presence in the very name of his lovesick music-loving count. But this kind of history is small stuff compared with the imperial associations of the town. It was on this lake that the Emperor Claudius limped and stuttered about his farm. The water he drank I also drink, and in its bottled form—called *Claudia*—his spirit, feminized, weakly gaseous, waits to stammer into the glass. Nor is it really fanciful—fancy induced by living in America—to see ancient Latium still around in modern Lazio. I recently heard a senior workman gently chiding his junior mate with the words *"Che te possino arrivortatte,"* in which that *possino* is too close to Latin *possint* for the comfort of the grammarians. And I also heard a genuinely venerable curse: *"Mannaggia Nerone,"* which I take to be really *"Male abbia Nerone,"* or "May evil seize Nero." This enshrining of the very old in modern spoken dialectal Italian is fascinating, and I gain the same thrill from it as I used to have as a boy in Lancashire when, somebody getting mad at somebody else, I would hear these words: "I'll play Amlet with thee, lad." That *Amlet* was evidently not Shakespeare's prince but a much older folk spirit, Amloth, brought to the North of England by the Danes and still folkishly remembered as somebody who broke into furious madness. Before I leave this point (What point? I'm not making points. I'm writing a letter, not a thesis), I must record my bafflement at something a little girl outside my window keeps calling, in a jeering tone, at somebody unseen. It is (over and over again) *"Donna di velluto,"* which literally means "velvet woman." Was velvet once worn only by prostitutes? Or was it the skin that was velvet, untried by sun, farmwork, washing-up water?

My wife and son and I sailed back to Italy, taking the *Michelangelo* from New York to Naples. I would rather have flown, but books had accumulated during our American stay, and it seemed easier to travel with our loads of luggage than to send them on ahead. Trips on Italian ships, full of Italo-Americans going home to flaunt their prosperity, bring out in me a thin-lipped puritanism I had thought to be long buried. I don't like these thick-necked eaters plowing through all the courses and threatening the waiters—who demur at demands for second helpings since the tables

✪ ANTHONY BURGESS' column appears in alternate issues of the SCHOLAR. His most recent novel is *MF*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to be reset for the next sitting—with eventual visits from urgent Sicilians. I don't like fat hairy bellies wambling about proudly in the sun. My wife and I austerely sat over thimblefuls of Sambuca and translated *Finnegans Wake* into Italian. (Our working title, by the way, is *pHorbiCEtta: forbicetta* means "earwig"; there you see Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker's initials sticking out of the word; he addresses the world—*orbi;* he is both pope and insect.) Nobody, incidentally, seems very enthusiastic about our embarking on this excruciatingly difficult job. I was, at first, innocent enough to be surprised. I have learned since about scholarly jealousy, translation rights long sold but never taken up, a very sincere lack—under the conventional expressions of devotion to the great literary dead—of fascination with what's difficult, in Turin, Milan and other publishing centers.

The thin-lipped puritanism has continued with me during a hot and ferial Italian summer. Too much nakedness, too much mindless solar worship. I broke out of festival estival Italy for a few days at the end of July to go back to America, to witness in Minneapolis the first performances of my translation of *Cyrano de Bergerac.* My pleasure was less in the verbal aspects of the production—a very fine production, incidentally, and one that won standing ovations and people calling for Rostand—than in having to do with the practicalities of music again, for I wrote the score as well as the English words. New things had to be added to this score during the frantic days before the first night, and this kind of urgency has always suited me very well: I like being a sort of musical journalist. For instance, the director, Michael Langham, thought that when Cyrano has the doors opened and looks out on Paris (". . . swimming through nocturnal mist, her rooftops draped in azure, shyly kissed by an uncertain moon," et cetera, et cetera), a kind of musical image of Paris ought to flow in. So I write a couple of alternating impressionistic chords for organ, have flute and clarinet undulating softly above in major thirds, bring in a sinuous theme deep down on the cello, thrust in a *quasi lontano* muted trumpet, add antique cymbal and a touch of triangle, and the job is done. So satisfying, so quick, so mindless, so unlike the practice of literature.

I came back to Bracciano anxious to write more music, so started on a concerto for clarinet and orchestra. But then something quite new and different supervened: a subterranean crystallization had evidently been proceeding for some time, and now various odd accidental factors conspired to push me to an undertaking that ought to have frightened me and, now that the work is done, is frightening me belatedly. I mean the composition of a Brechtian-type musical based on Joyce's *Ulysses.* There was the excitement of the collocation of stage, words and music in Minneapolis; there was a trip my wife and I took to Yugoslavia, via Trieste, where a street has at last been named after Joyce; there was a reunion with Richard Ellmann in Venice; there was a violent, essentially Northern, reaction to brown Italian bodies and solar torpor. Anyway, I started writing "book," lyrics and (in short score) music for this version of *Ulysses* on August 3, and now, on August 22, I have on my desk a completed typescript of nearly ninety pages and some hundred and fifty pages of vocal music. I suppose I am right to be frightened.

My wife, rightly, insisted at one point in the unremitting task that we get into our motor caravan and move seaward: the temperature in Bracciano has never been less than ninety in the shade all through this rainless August. I could take manuscript paper, fine-nibbed pen and bottle of ink with me, and, dot-and-dashing away, have the sun on my back and my eyes off the insolent haired and muscular *machismo* or *gallismo* of Italian youth. Unfortunately, on two occasions, a strong sea-wind knocked my ink bottle over and drenched hours of hard work to illegibility. The Italian strangers who saw this happen were either amused or aesthetically interested. "See what a beautiful pattern the wind and the ink have made. *Bellissimo.*" The odd Italo-American would say, on occasions when I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was working safely in a sheltered *trattoria:* "Hey, mister, that music? How you write music without a piano, mister?" The Italians, you see, are external people who can only conceive of music as gross physical sound. But the fact is that the lack of a piano has made this three weeks of composition curiously lonely: I've been unable to share anything with anybody except the occasional croaked vocal line with my wife. Italy is a country that lacks pianos. Italy is perhaps essentially a not very musical country (except for sexy tenors and the simplest Moody and Sankey chordal progressions). The only piano I have encountered in Italy that was at all playable was in a *trattoria* in Cremona (that famous "mustard" of Cremona, by the way, is crystallized fruit in syrup, which, if you wish, you can mix with dry mustard powder: you eat it with meat—a very uncharacteristic collocation of sweet and savory). I played this piano for the *trattoria* proprietor and his family and friends, or it may have been all family, and was asked for the usual things—Puccini arias, *Avanti popolo,* and so on. There was a mandolin lying on top of the piano, and I performed my sole little musical trick with it—playing a tune on the mandolin with my right hand, accompanying on the piano with my left. Nobody thought this surprising or amusing: it was presumably the sort of thing that anyone who could *suonare,* as opposed to *cantare,* naturally did. The Italians are not, I think, a musical people.

My private artistic agonies have, I'm afraid, gotten in the way of the impact of great public events. But I have not been able to ignore the death of the dollar, as the Italian press delights in calling it. What little money I earn from writing I earn mostly in dollars, and now I join American expatriates and tourists in shame, practical humiliation, and damnable inconvenience. I found myself stranded in a remote marine town with uncashable travelers' checks; I find my bank balance smaller than I thought. Very few Italians, I noticed, actually exulted in the American predicament. America sneezes—the proverb is something musty. But the Communist press inveighs against President Nixon as an enemy of the worker in tortuous political Italian, which I find hard to understand. Meanwhile, the lira has its own problems. Even a year ago a thousand-lire note felt solid: now it feels as a dollar used to feel back in New Jersey. Gasoline is excruciatingly dear: one of our purposes in driving into Yugoslavia in our British-made motor caravan was to reenter Italy in a kind of renewed touristic capacity and thus get the tourist's concession of cheap gasoline coupons. Wine is no longer something you take as a thoughtless adjunct to a meal. Ten-lire coins have to be kept and saved, not thrown away. Italy, like every other country in the world, is turning into America. And there are strikes and demonstrations and riot police grinning as they march on to a nonexistent riot. The Fascists are back; naked confrontations with far right and far left have an almost theological starkness. Nevertheless—but no: to make a big concessive clause of it all would be sentimental. Italy is not the most desirable country of the world to live in, although it must seem like it during a New Jersey winter or a Tennessee summer. All places are probably equally bad, but one has to live somewhere. Why Italy? Why not?

I have had one of those accessions of philosophical conviction—almost Pauline in their violence—which frequently come in middle age (and in youth also, I seem to remember). There's nothing original in the conviction, of course: there never is. A voice told me not to kick against the pricks but to accept the truth of solipsism. The world is here, inside; I am I; I am also what I feed on; that lake out there, these three towns of Bracciano, Trevignano and Anguillara are there to be turned into me. There is no escape from me in the external world, or in drink or drugs; I had better start learning to live with myself. The only way I can live with myself, I find, is to justify my being here at all, and the way of justification is the way of work. I feel guilty when I am not writing, and so I write. But how do I explain the extreme melancholy that comes over me

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even when I am hard at self-justification? The melancholic fit that struck me a week ago and has mercifully—but, I know, only temporarily—passed could find no palliation in the sun or in the cafés. It seemed to me to be mad to be sitting over wine among beautiful people under a glorious light in a superbly picturesque town and feeling—for no reason I could probe—suicidal. But the realization that such fits are impossibly possible perhaps confirms the importance of believing in the existence of oneself as something, as it were, parallel to the external order. I melancholize, therefore I am.

I resume this letter on October 14, in my flat in Rome, with the podgy baroque angels of Piazza Santa Cecilia looking in on me. My seven-year-old son has just started school, and I wonder at the resilience and linguistic genius of children. For my son was speaking Maltese in 1969-70, New Jersey English in 1970-71, and is now fluent and aromatic in Roman Italian. He has to go to school wearing a *grembiulino,* which is a blue overall buttoned at the back, topped with a plastic Eton collar and floppy artist's cravat. The girls, who are supposed to be cleaner creatures than boys, wear white ones. This is genuine acclimatization, and I see that I have turned into a Roman father. I would much rather, I think, be a Florentine or Venetian father, for the more I see of the Romans the less I like them.

But Rome must hold me for a time, since I'm planning a novel about the state of the modern papacy. Vittorio Gassman, in a film called *Il Profeta,* made a just remark: *"Roma sarebbe bella senza i Romani."* And so it would be. But, even with the Romans and their weird decline-of-the-empire language, their coarse jokes about *culi* and *uccelli* and their abominable food, there is much to like about Rome.

There are, for instance, a great number of cinemas. Last night I saw a re-run of the Italian version of *My Fair Lady,* which represented one of the profoundest sociolinguistic lessons I have ever experienced. For there is no real parallel in Italian society to the plight and dialectological ambition of Eliza Doolittle. Professor Higgins intones the five Italian vowels at her, and she has to contrive a wholly factitious difficulty in imitating him. He teaches her to pronounce her aitches, but there are no aitches in Italian, so we have to enter a never-never land where it becomes essential for her, an Italian flower-seller, to pronounce the names of certain English counties correctly. When we come to "The rain in Spain" she has to say, *"La rana in Spagna gracida in campagna"*—"the frog in Spain croaks in the countryside"—but with the pronounciation of Bari in Puglia, which gives the *a* and *e* value. The great climax at Ascot, where ladies faint on hearing Eliza's lowness, is easily effected, since *culo* is "arse" and, although much used, not very polite. It brought the Roman house down, as might be expected. Any reference to a *culo* goes straight to their heart-surrogates. I am, as you see, although aging, learning all the time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Yale

American Medicine and the Public Interest

by Rosemary Stevens

American medicine is in the midst of upheaval. National health insurance is being widely discussed and will undoubtedly become one of the major political issues of the 1970s. Medical schools are in financial crisis and new types of health care organizations are being proposed, including the development of "primary care." In tracing and emphasizing the interconnections and cross-influences of professional, social, and legislative developments in health, and in analyzing future implications, this study provides a timely and authoritative statement. $18.50

Materialism and Sensations

by James W. Cornman

Today, as it was for Hobbes, a crucial test for the success of a materialistic philosophy is how well it deals with the problem of sensations. Philosophers have tried to explain them away, reduce them to something purely physical, and interpret them is such a way as to eliminate the term altogether. Cornman characterizes contemporary versions of these arguments as Reductive Materialism, Eliminative Materialism, and Adverbial Materialism. His exhaustive analyses of the weaknesses of the first two solutions shows that the only plausible solution to the problem is to construe sensations "adverbially," and thereby reduce them to brain processes. $10.00

Patterning of Time

by Leonard W. Doob

In this wide-ranging study of the ancient, fascinating problem of time, Leonard Doob makes use of insights and data provided by the social sciences, psychology, psychiatry, and the arts, and seeks to define what we know and do not know. The topics under discussion include the varieties of temporal systems in different societies, the approach through psychophysics and experimental psychology, the so-called internal clock which most persons think they have, and the development of a temporal sense in children. A detailed examination is made of the influence upon time perception of emotional states, drugs, dreams, hypnosis, aging, mental disorders personality, groups, work and social change. $15.00

Their Solitary Way

The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England
by Stephen Foster

Puritanism has received much of the blame for the evils of twentieth-century America. But the Puritan immigrants came to New England principally to participate in a viable form of government and had no thought of the future impact of their social ethics. Using rich and varied sources, Mr. Foster perceptively examines the rules of behavior the settlers thought they should follow as members of a civil community, and shows that—despite its many ambiguities and paradoxes—Puritanism in New England was a coherent and truly new way of life. $7.50

Memoirs of a Russian Diplomat

Outposts of the Empire, 1893-1917
by Andrew D. Kalmykow

The eve of the Russian Revolution is one of the most intriguing and significant phases of Russian history, yet it is imperfectly understood, largely because of the biases so noticeable in sources relating to this period. These memoirs, covering some three decades preceding the Russian Revolution, have the rare merit of scholarly objectivity. A man of many achievements—including knowledge of fourteen languages—Andrew D. Kalmykow was a learned student of the past as well as a keen observer of current events. In a captivating style he relates his life in Russia and his diplomatic service in the Far, Middle, and Near East and the Balkans. $12.50

Yale University Press New Haven and London
in Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from Princeton

Victors' Justice

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial

RICHARD H. MINEAR

Mr. Minear's comprehensive account, the first in English, reviews the Tokyo trial from the aspects of international law, legal process, and history—from its Charter and Nuremberg "precedent" to its effects today. "An extremely timely, engagingly well-written study that should draw strong responses pro and con."—*Publishers' Weekly* Illus. $7.95

The Intellectual Origins of the French Enlightenment

IRA O. WADE

To understand the movement of ideas that produced the spirit of the Enlightenment, Mr. Wade identifies and examines the people, events, and rich development of philosophy in the Renaissance and seventeenth century. $20.00

The Mortal Napoleon III

ROGER L. WILLIAMS

To what extent *did* Napoleon's illnesses affect his political decisions and his ability to rule? Roger Williams' biographical study shows how medical evidence can be used as historical data to refine our view of the past. $8.50

The Birth of Mass Political Parties

Michigan, 1827-1861

RONALD P. FORMISANO

Using Michigan as a case study, Ronald Formisano examines the social bases of voter commitment and the dynamics of grass-roots loyalties from Jackson to Lincoln. $12.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ghiberti's Bronze Doors

RICHARD KRAUTHEIMER

Ghiberti's double achievement, the East and North doors of the Baptistery in Florence, is seen in the 160 illustrations Richard Krautheimer has extracted from his monumental *Lorenzo Ghiberti*. His brief introduction discusses the artist's life, the style and meaning of the scenes depicted.

8½ × 11. 160 Illus. $7.50

Milton and His England

DON M. WOLFE

In narrative and some 120 pictures, Mr. Wolfe traces Milton's life in the context of the public events and common scenes of his time. Using passages from history and the poet's own writings, he brings to life the people, politics, and society of 17th-century England. 8½ × 11. 120 Illus. $10.00

The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642

GERALD EADES BENTLEY

Mr. Bentley marshals evidence from the theatrical materials of the 16th and 17th centuries—plays, contracts, letters, business records—to discuss the actual conditions under which the professional dramatists worked, the attitudes and regulations that constrained Shakespeare and his contemporaries. $10.00

Sarah Bernhardt: The Art within the Legend

GERDA TARANOW

To know only the legendary "divine Sarah" is to know little about Bernhardt the artist. Through a study of the actress' films, records, and writings, Miss Taranow reconstructs the rigorously developed artistry that lay behind the superb performances. Illus. $10.00

Princeton University Press

Princeton, New Jersey 08540

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Revolving Bookstand

Signs of the Times

GEOFFREY H. HARTMAN

THE PERFORMING SELF: Compositions and Decompositions in the Languages of Contemporary Life. *By Richard Poirier. Oxford University Press. $6.50.*
BLINDNESS AND INSIGHT: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism. *By Paul de Man. Oxford University Press. $6.95.*
THE MODERN SPIRIT: Essays on the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Literature. *By Robert Langbaum. Oxford University Press. $6.50.*

"Nobody . . . knew for sure . . . in what kind of performance he was involved." Richard Poirier makes this remark on the Rolling Stones's festival at Altamont, which turned into a bloody fray. Criticism is no Altamont, and critics no Rolling Stones, but the one thing these three books have in common is their uncertainty about what kind of "performance" criticism may be. We feel how difficult it is for them to insist on themselves, on their own function.

The literary critic has always worried about being faithful to the great, the revelatory, text, but today he worries also about being there at all, in the classroom, or as the mediator of a genuine discipline. There are many reasons for this. Criticism is, by nature, a problematic activity. Even the best essays are secondary products, stimulated by the literature on which they comment. We read them to remain in the shadow of something that is greater and that we don't wish to face all the time. But a new reason, in the case of Poirier's *The Performing Self,* is the claim to recognition made by popular culture.

Great art reduces us to silence or banality but popular art wants to be noised about and to achieve the widest currency. It has no discernible gold standard. How can we study it without overintellectualizing—imposing standards or attitudes from so-called high culture? Indeed, is not the danger of intellectualizing even greater when touchstones from high culture cannot be applied? For then art of any kind becomes simply an "object" with an analyzable "structure."

"The study of popular culture must start with analyses that are as close, disciplined and detailed as one can make them." Let us agree with Poirier that we can learn from the Beatles as well as from Blake, but where do we go for our terms if we don't want merely a self-advertising puff or "a bad dream of Brooks and Warren"? Is it to structuralism, is it to sociology?

Ten years ago Poirier coedited a book called *In Defense of Reading.* His new work is in good part a defense of what is coming to be known as "cultural reading." Yet "reading" a culture may be as perverse an activity as westernizing China. Reading is not a neutral technique; it is shaped by classics it in turn supports. To "read" boxing matches or pop festivals yields, therefore, predictable results. Modern popular art is seen to be a "bad dream" of high art, a gay nightmare, so to speak. Parody, energy and role-playing move to the fore. But your cultural reader will not assume that popular art wants to waken from the nightmare,

✪ GEOFFREY H. HARTMAN is a professor in the department of comparative literature at Yale University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STUDY IN CUERNAVACA, MEXICO

THE ONE EFFECTIVE WAY TO LEARN SPANISH

STUDY SIX HOURS EACH DAY

FOUR STUDENTS PER TEACHER

REGISTER FOR WEEKLY PERIODS/$30

START ANY FIRST OR THIRD MONDAY

If you have decided to master Spanish, and if you want to do so in no more than three months, come to CIDOC for a minimum of four weeks. While here, you have the opportunity to join informally an academy addressing itself to radical alternatives in our institutions, especially in Latin America. Yearly registration fee is $50. Room and board in Cuernavaca from about $80 monthly.

For catalog and further information, write:

CIDOC APDO. 479, CUERNAVACA, MEXICO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or into something else. He lets it be. It is what it is: the demonic shadow of high culture, accusing, self-indulgent, self-wasting, exuberant.

A malaise affects, however, even those critics who do not accept the challenge of popular culture. They can argue, after all, that the distinction between popular and high art is exaggerated. Each has its own realm, to be sure, but it is virtually a cliché of literary history since Herder and the Romantics that the comprehensive vision of great artists—Chaucer, Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare—is related to their respect for popular traditions. "Popular culture" and "youth culture" are not the same, in any historical perspective. The new element is not folk art but youth's self-identification as its source and champion. No need, therefore, to accept this new myth uncritically.

Then why are scholar-critics like Poirier so uneasy? Because, first of all, there is still a historical debt to be paid in America to the "vernacular matrix" (W. J. Ong) of literature. In England F. R. Leavis and the *Scrutiny* group emphasized English as a living, idiomatic tongue—verbal making, what Poirier characterizes as "the mere turning of a sentence this way or that," became more important than other literary accomplishments (satisfying genre specifications, for example) precisely because it played against "the accumulations of culture." But recovering the English vernacular matrix meant reviving a literate tradition (ballads, dialects, spoken idiom) while in America the recovered matrix never seemed to reach further down than to the naïve myths and horny humor of the white settlers. The expressive potential of the subcultures was too submerged, in any case, less literate, more bound up with semiverbal forms like Negro spirituals or contemporary rock. To recover the vernacular matrix in America involves a sharper clash between literate and nonliterate.

From this point of view Poirier's interest in the performing arts is justified. One might say that these arts too have been a mere subculture for the literate critic, and are only now being brought into the main stream of articulate thought. Poirier's adjustment of literature to the other arts through the concept of "performance" may be of real value in redirecting our attention and honoring the affinity of folk art to theater, song and bodily energies. Whether it is of value to literature itself is more doubtful.

There is a final reason for the pop perplexity of some modern critics. Even if we explode the myth of youth culture, youth remains. We are not critics to society, at present, but to collegiate youth. We have been trapped into a reduced role or social identity: into a client relation opposite to (but no better than) that of high class retainers at "elitist" universities. The sheer numbers involved in mass education and the weight of expectation on the critic-teacher are turning him into a literary disc jockey. The pressure to *conform* has given way to the pressure to *perform*. The rapping needed to counter the counterculture will end by reviving the preacher we have been trying to kill off in ourselves these last hundred years.

There is, consequently, a lot of very explicit and dramatic language in *The Performing Self*. The book is fraught with agonistic terms and it tries to achieve coherence by means of the concept of "performance." The word is a rich one, stressing engagement, energy, play, productivity and form-giving. But the concept itself is not a significant advance over the idea popularized by the New Critics that there must be a commitment of the artist to his art, to his medium. One shapes a self, says Poirier, out of the materials in which it is immersed. He does not define those materials, however. They are simply that which opposes or challenges the self. Any "self-discovering, self-watching, finally self-pleasuring response" to pressures and difficulties could fall under the concept. The resultant perspective is at once intensely materialistic (valuing social or physical determinants) and intensely idealistic (valuing the self-shaping self). Instead of genuine theoretical essays we have a lively but mixed book of criticism, confession and literary apologetics. One can argue for impurity in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Columbia

THE DANCER'S IMAGE

Points and Counterpoints

Walter Sorell. The noted author-critic "touches on virtually every facet of the arts and their relationship to the dance, from Euripides to Freud to John Cage."—*Publishers' Weekly* $15.00

ENGLISH WRITERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

John H. Middendorf, editor. Sixteen essays on a wide variety of topics touching such major figures as Samuel Johnson, Jonathan Swift, and John Dryden. $10.00

MOTOR DISTURBANCE

Kenward Elmslie. Winner of the annual Frank O'Hara Award for Poetry, named for the American poet who was killed in 1966. Cloth $4.95, Paper $1.95

GHAZALS OF GHALIB

Aijaz Ahmad, editor. Poetic renderings of the Ghazals by the Urdu poet Ghalib (1797-1869) by Thomas Fitzsimmons, William Hunt, W. S. Merwin, David Ray, Adrienne Rich, William Stafford, and Mark Strand. Cloth $10.00, Paper $3.95

THE ANATOMY OF LOVE

A Study of the Tristan of Gottfried von Strassburg

W. T. H. Jackson. A detailed analysis of the only study available in English of one of the major poetic works of the 13th century. $12.50

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Address for orders: 136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

art, but an impure theory is merely a confused theory.

The idea of performance is useful, at best, to modify our obsession with "technique." Poirier is surely right in identifying technique as something the artist performs against. The artist faces a chaos of forms, of possible structures, and what was once an effective idea of order may now be part of the chaos, part of what is to be overcome. "One must fight through the glitter and rubbish to express anything worthwhile, to express even the rubbish." Poirier's best essays are on the subject of waste, self-parody and accumulation: on the experience of being "heaped" (Ahab's word in *Moby Dick* for the pressure on him of the great whale). The concept of performance is counterassertive to this pressure, as the concept of style was in his earlier *A World Elsewhere*. Poirier now thinks of literary technique as a false mastery of the contemporary situation, or as part of a general embarrassment of riches that besets the individual artist.

Our "waste land," in other words, is not a desert but a dump: we suffer from too much rather than from too little, from that rate of change and inexorable accumulation of cultural detritus that Henry Adams noted toward the end of his *Education*. Actually there are two heaps between which we live: that of the signifiers, the outmoded signs, myths, allusions and styles, and what the signifiers supposedly signify: reality, the Vietnam war, the war in our cities, all such immediate pressures that disable the signifiers from another angle. Our sense of existence, of being-in-the-world, is at once heightened and undermined by an endlessly inflowing contemporaneity.

There is no easy solution to this dilemma. "Performance," as a term and concept, seems all too light for it, too Pateresque. Is it aestheticism's last defense? Beyond it one glimpses clown or messiah, rather than Michelangelo's "Captive" depicted on the dust jacket, and described as "emerging from stone . . . straining up as from the elements . . . trying to push off the imposing weight which imprisons the head." The real hero of this book is Norman Mailer, who, says Poirier, "at his best . . . seeks contamination." One thinks sadly of the ending of Cavafy's famous poem, "Awaiting the Barbarians": "Those men were a kind of solution."

Poirier is too cool a critic to deify Mailer. His admiration is nuanced; and he also stops short of announcing the manifest destiny of youth culture. His last essay, in fact, comments on our inevitable failures of sympathy as the demand on those sympathies escalates. "It must be recognized that the feeling of sympathy is altogether more circumscribed and selective than we have allowed ourselves, under the stimulation of the classics of literature, to believe." Yet how perverse to put the blame on "the classics of literature," which is code for works admired in the academic curriculum, works of the "liberal imagination."

The classics, surely, by the very notion of convention, admit the need to anchor imagination in the ground of some common interest: national, racial, religious, social. We cannot hold them responsible for the academic bull market that developed after World War II, and its speculation in literature as "world-community" stock. The great works of the Romantic period, moreover, which first expressed that doctrine of the sympathetic imagination that still has us in thrall, show clearly enough the tragic conflict between it and life. "The good die first / And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust / Burn to the socket." (Wordsworth)

Poirier is a brilliant critic as long as he remains critical. He scores palpable hits on precise targets that include young as well as old, relevance seekers as well as academics. Yet his power to construct an effective literary theory lags behind his brilliance as a critic. The reason for this is that he does not trust literature enough. He does not trust it to throw off theories that idealize it wrongly. He is so concerned with the academy and its imprisonment of art in exalted "liberal" ideas that through him the voice of the teacher rather than that of the work itself is heard. Fine moments of immediate engagement with literature (his analyses of Eliot, Mailer, Frost and Borges,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOSSILS AND FLIES

THE LIFE OF A COMPLEAT SCIENTIST

SAMUEL WENDELL WILLISTON (1851-1918)

By Elizabeth Noble Shor

The biography of a distinguished man of science, an engineer, surveyor, physician, paleontologist, and entomologist. More than a simple recount of facts, Mrs. Shor's book has all the elements of the great American success story: the boy of humble origin rising to the peak of his profession and being justly acclaimed by his peers. Illustrated. $8.95.

OTHER INTERESTING BOOKS

ZHUKOV
By Otto Preston Chaney, Jr. Foreword by Malcolm Mackintosh. Profusely Illustrated. $9.95

HEADS AND HEADLINES: The Phrenological Fowlers
By Madeleine B. Stern. Illustrated. $8.95.

JOSEPH STORY AND THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION
By James McClellan. Illustrated. $12.50.

Available At Your Local Bookstore

University of Oklahoma Press

1005 Asp Avenue Norman, Oklahoma 73069

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among others) fall back into the polemical context and become part of the history of pedagogy rather than that of criticism.

In *Beyond Culture* Lionel Trilling also acknowledged the challenge of modern literature to the teacher and to the "liberal imagination" generally. The path from this literature to the humanistic study of it seemed to Trilling complex and precarious because its passions strained against any known political or cultural framework. Yet Trilling was able to suggest what in the older framework helped the radical impulse to survive. Through the Greek and Latin classics, for instance, Freud acquired the notion of an ideal type of culture with deep human interest yet no very contemporary relevance. This helped to prevent the nation-state from appropriating his thoughts. It fostered a power of what might be called *dissimilation*. Trilling saw, of course, the negative side of this "useless passion" for the classics, but what is important is that he looked at social conventions as a whole and was unafraid to speculate on the functional aspects of idealism.

Poirier restricts his interest, however, to the fallacious or destructive idealism. Take his objection—valuable in itself—to our identifying the young as a new Virgin Land. "Current attacks on the young . . . depend on a prior idealization, a separation of them from history. To treat them as if they alone, of all the elements of society, are so exonerated as to represent some saving remnant is ultimately murderous." Criticism of idealistic residues is not enough, however. What is equally imperative is to think about the idealism that *any* creative or structural concept implies. The idea of a "saving remnant" can be misapplied but its survival value is too great to be demystified.

The challenge to literary studies of the de-idealizing or demystifying critics is taken up by Paul de Man in his collection of nine essays on major figures in European criticism. *Blindness and Insight* is the most subtly argued book of its kind I have read: the product of a continuously alive intelligence. It has in it what Wallace Stevens calls "The hum of thoughts evaded in the mind." De Man's argument begins, in a sense, with his own style, an antirhetorical "rhetoricity" more insidious and powerful than the theory supported by it.

Poirier, for instance, is rhetorical in the common sense of the word, strident, associative, full of what might be called off-sights —those strong, partly analyzed ideas that are spun off his passion for literature and its relevance. A vocabulary of crisis predominates. But criticism is the opposite of crisisism for de Man. It does not respond counterassertively to pressures from without, and is not afraid to amount to very little that is positive (or positivistic). Because de Man combines a religious sense of the vanity of human understanding with a philosophical irony that insists on understanding as the only good, he can detach himself from the immediacies (both pedagogical and political) we feel so overwhelmingly in Poirier's book. This detachment is not unawareness but a response at a different level, a more reflective and intrinsically critical position.

To move now from de Man's style to his theory of critical style. His counterattack on those who see literary language as idealistic involves a view that lessens the distinction between literary and literary-critical discourse. Modern art, as Friedrich Schlegel remarked, is distinguished by its deeply self-critical aspect. De Man adds that critical writing in turn has a literary component, and he means by that not blowsy or purple-poetic but something that remains "in the difficulty of what it is to be":

> A literary text is not a phenomenal event that can be granted any form of positive existence, whether as a fact of nature or as an act of the mind. It leads to no transcendental perception . . . but merely solicits an understanding that has to remain immanent. . . .

De Man's opening essay ("Criticism and Crisis") shows what happens when a critic becomes too positive and resorts to the language of crisis. The language of crisis like that of love is always the same, and it is blind. It arrogates to itself that very "privilege" it seeks to destroy in others. It remains rhetorical or literary but without knowing that it is. So Edmund Husserl,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVIEW OF NATIONAL LITERATURES

"BLACK AFRICA"

Vol. II, No. 2 **Fall, 1971**

ARTICLES BY: Clive Wake, Harold Scheub, Bernth Lindfors, Daniel P. Kunene, A. Neil Skinner, Gerald M. Moser, Joseph Mbelolo, Adeboye Babalola, Janheinz Jahn, Richard C. Clark, John Povey, and Lyndon Harries

Editor: ANNE PAOLUCCI

Special Editor: Albert Gérard, University of Liège, Belgium

"A valuable addition to larger literature collections."
LIBRARY JOURNAL

COMING. . .

Volume III, Number 1, Spring 1972

RUSSIA: THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM
Special Editor: Charles A. Moser
The George Washington University

Editor: ANNE PAOLUCCI; Managing Editor: ROBERT A. ROSENBAUM; Copy Editor: MARGARET M. LAMB; Editorial Board; FRANK L. KUNKEL, MARY LYNCH, VINCENT QUINN, GAETANO L. VINCITORIO

Subscription Rates: $4.00 *a year* ($5.00 *outside U.S.A.*); *single copies* (current), $2.00 ($2.50 *outside U.S.A.*); three-year subscription, $11.00 ($13.00 outside U.S.A.); back issues individually priced.

Editorial and Business Office: Perboyre Hall, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York 11432.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pursuing a universalistic thesis in "The Crisis of European Humanity and Philosophy" (1935), fails to question the privileged point of view from which he writes: the European, post-Hellenic conception of philosophizing that he promulgates at a moment catastrophic for it.

It is this very question of a privileged mode of language or point of view—under attack in Continental thought from the side of structuralism, anthropology, linguistics and Marxism—that de Man's book scrupulously examines. Literary idealism, generally defined, is a belief in the possibility of unmediated expression or in a constitutive self with the power to break through social veils and similar determinants. De Man says quite simply that these "privileges" are never claimed by art in any literal or unequivocal way. The mistake of would-be demystifiers is to *literalize* the idealism of art, and so to claim more by asserting something about fiction than it claimed by not asserting—by remaining fiction. Although literature means what it says (de Man excludes psychologism or other modes of depth-analysis) it never totally says its meaning because sign and meaning cannot coincide. To think they can is the greatest naïveté; to think art believes they can, the next greatest. It makes of art a nostalgic semantic, a vicarious or compensatory fullness that deprives it of authenticity vis-à-vis both life and signification. There is a "constitutive discrepancy" of word and self in all genuine writing, whether literary or literary-critical:

> That sign and meaning can never coincide, is what is precisely taken for granted in the kind of language we call literary. Literature, unlike everyday language, begins on the far side of this knowledge; it is the only form of language free from the fallacy of unmediated expression. All of us know this, although we know it in the misleading way of a wishful assertion of the opposite. Yet the truth emerges in the foreknowledge we possess of the true nature of literature when we refer to it as *fiction*. . . . Here the human self has experienced the void within itself. . . .

Blindness and Insight does not develop de Man's theories in any systematic way. This is unfortunate because too many questions remain unsettled, or lost in the sinuous prose. We still need from de Man a clear theory of reading (or misreading) and a clear concept of textuality that would allow us to distinguish literary from literary-critical. He goes too deviously from the semiotic to the hermeneutic, from the discrepancy between sign and meaning to that between the assertive critical model and the interpretive insight seemingly based on it. Despite all his subtly eloquent variations on this discrepancy—despite all the difficult and deceptive interplay of blindness and insight or text and reader—a stubborn sense remains in us that there is an accountable difference between literary and literary-critical texts. The implied monism of de Man's theory of textuality pairs strangely with a semiotic that is binary or dualistic. One must ask whether the distinction so peculiar to literary studies between primary and secondary texts is fallacious, or whether some notion of privilege or ontological priority does not accrue to the work of art over against that of the critic.

De Man's refusal to expose his insights in a systematic manner is puzzling, and may be owing to the accident of collecting this book before his more literary studies on the Romantic and post-Romantic tradition. It may also be a matter of temperament erected into theory. He likes exegesis: he treats critics like Blanchot, Poulet and Lukács as if they were primary texts and not commentary—as if they had the texture and strength of Mallarmé's *La Musique et les Lettres* (De Man considers it "more than equal in verbal and thematic complexity . . . to a page of *Un coup de dés*"). Reading de Man on Derrida on Rousseau—which could have produced sterile metacriticism—fosters instead a "fourth" dimension that is like the *generalized conscience* of the act of reading. There is intellectual accrual but there is also a negative movement that swerves from every new and possessive insight.

This is not to say that *Blindness and Insight* makes no tangible contributions. Its "deconstructions" can be disarming but it analyzes with precision writers who have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

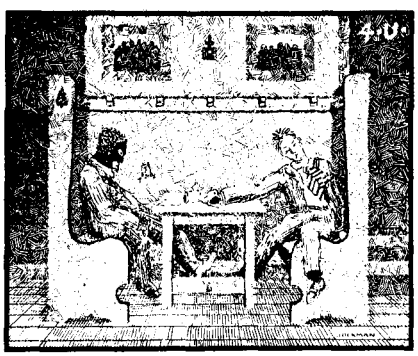
F. Scott Fitzgerald
IN HIS OWN TIME

a miscellany

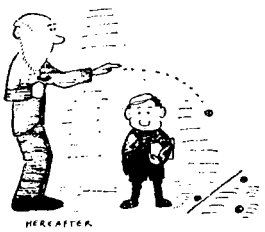
Edited by
Matthew J. Bruccoli
and Jackson R. Bryer

A collection of materials by or about F. Scott Fitzgerald that appeared during his lifetime but most of which have never since been reprinted. The first section, writings *by* Fitzgerald, contains his syndicated newspaper pieces, reviews of his contemporaries' novels, book blurbs and letters to editors, and much previously ungathered sketches, poetry, and undergraduate humor, including material from the Princeton Triangle shows. The second section contains materials *about* Fitzgerald: reviews of his books, interviews, parodies, and, finally, the more perceptive of the obituaries.

"...an invaluable research tool...to enable critics and literary historians to study further the evolution of a vaudevillian into a tragic comedian." — *Baltimore Sun*



LC: 76-126919; ISBN: 0-87338-108-4
xx & 481 pages, illustrated, $12.50



F. Scott Fitzgerald

For the Contact Tiers
The best barber in France. Who cuts the hair of literary men—but not as in the cartoons
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Write for complete catalog

THE KENT STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
KENT, OHIO 44242

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

provided European thought with new conceptual models and who are gradually becoming known in America. The essays on Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida in particular seem to me definitive; that on Georges Poulet is both more and less than a critique—it penetrates to the man's own sense of fragility. The article on the Swiss psychoanalyst Ludwig Binswanger contains a distinction between the empirical (personal) and ontological (aesthetic) self profounder than that provided in American persona theories. An important continuity in de Man's book is the recurrence in his analysis of the basic notions of intentionality, hermeneutic circle, modernity and genetic historiography. This could restore to American criticism the philosophical bases it has either ignored or employed eclectically. De Man, at the same time, by the centrality he accords to poets as thinkers, suggests the usefulness rather than necessity of these sources: philosophical currents are not privileged at the expense of literary ones but acknowledged because they were (and are) present. Finally, his skepticism toward the organicist assumption in critical theories—it asserts in protean ways Coleridge's view of art as reconciliation—can emancipate us from an attractive superstition that has held sway at least since I. A. Richards. It is the more necessary, therefore, that de Man displace by a systematic effort of his own Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism,* which is the fountainhead of contemporary theories of reading and threatens even now to beget powerful imps at Berkeley.

Matthew Arnold, not Richards, is the problem for Robert Langbaum. Or rather he is no problem. Langbaum's essays and addresses of the last five years, collected under the title *The Modern Spirit,* are still Arnold-intoxicated in theory and style. They are unashamedly pedagogic in their total respect for the student: every reference is made clear, the pacing is perfect, and they are, despite deep learning, totally free of pedantry. Like Arnold, too, Langbaum thinks that the bloodiness of ideas will cease, that ideas can circulate easily in a free market of discourse, and that religion in particular has already yielded its sting and become poetic myth. "Value" here is a contemplative rather than a fighting word; poetry's "role-playing" and "strategy" seem to be a kind of war-game at best; and the most general premise of his first, explicitly Arnoldian essay, "The Function of Criticism Once More," that "it is [the critic's] job to turn the work of art into a cultural acquisition" allows him to face even Norman Mailer with clearsightedness and relative pedagogic serenity. Each of these various essays—on Wordsworth, the Victorian Idea of Culture, on Tennyson, Browning, E. M. Forster, Shakespeare and Modern Nature Poetry—uses familiar critical concepts in an urbane and lively manner: organic form, historical evolution, dynamic unity, projection, the quest for identity. I find myself in the embarrassing position of agreeing with Langbaum on most points yet feeling too much the ease of his formulations. In the face of his mastery I become a kind of Satan, muttering to myself, "Difficulty, be Thou my good."

In a sense, then, Langbaum is an exception to what I said about these critics being deeply apologetic. *The Modern Spirit* could have been published twenty years ago: its language is very much that of Eliot and Trilling, although the applications are always interesting and one feels its indebtedness as a *classic instance of continuity.* Indeed, the book reveals continuity whenever it can: the point, for instance, in Wallace Stevens where "nature poetry comes full circle from the rejection of the old religion of nature to the discovery of an inevitably re-emerging religion of nature at the source of things." De Manian blindness is not emphasized; insight is; and on the whole this critic (as was already clear in his book on Isak Dinesen) prefers those whose eyes are darkly gay, like the mandarins in Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli." While we do not hear in his essays a naïve "O brave new world," we do constantly hear something equivalent to the astronaut's "Contact!" The essay on Mailer, for example, is probably the best single introduction to his literary career, and far more detailed and dis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RICHARD M. FREELAND

The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism

A major study that traces the roots of anti-communism in American politics to its use during the Truman Administration as a device for mobilizing Congressional and popular support for unpopular foreign policies.

■ "This is one of the most important works on the Cold War I have read in a very long time. It is of the utmost significance and deserves the widest attention."—Walter LaFeber, Professor of History, Cornell

■ "His thesis that the fanaticism and hysteria [of McCarthyism] were the direct result of the Truman Administration's premeditated and deliberate campaign to exaggerate the communist issue is well documented, important and very revealing." —Gar Alperovitz, author of *Atomic Diplomacy*

$10 • To be published in January by Alfred • A • Knopf

BARROWS DUNHAM

Ethics Dead and Alive

After tracing the decline of ethical theory—from George Edward Moore who said in 1903 that the word "good" is indefinable to the Emotivists who now say that moral statements merely "evince" our feelings —Barrows Dunham attempts a recovery of ethics by working out such concepts as integrity, kindness, the ambiguities of power, in terms of personal and social life. Finally, in answer to existential pessimism, he calls attention to its existential (though today philosophically ignored) opposite: the universal human experience of joy.

$6.95 · Published by Alfred · A · Knopf

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passionate than that in Poirier's *Performing Self,* but Poirier keeps the scandal of such writing more vividly before us, and resists making the man into a "cultural acquisition."

Yet appearances deceive, or perhaps I want them to deceive and to find behind Langbaum's acculturations symptoms of what Freud called *"Unbehagen"*—unease. The idea of culture is the book's hero: it (or associated ideas) is said to give coherence to the main body of modern literature. The Victorian writers, in Langbaum's revaluation, have taught us that culture "can and should be antithetical to the prevailing ideology." He suggests, in fact, that we should henceforth classify societies into open and closed, into those respecting the autonomy of culture and those that use it for propaganda purposes—to reinforce, that is, the dominant ideology. There is culture and there is *Kultur.*

Yet the objection—so much a motivation for Poirier—that all culture is a covert form of culture-politics is not taken up. Moreover, Langbaum's wish for a "complete criticism" that will make the literary work transitive, and allow its energies to commute back and forth in the context of the human sciences, and so teach our dangerously technological age the importance of the literary mind—this surely runs the risk of making literature too serviceable. The cry for social relevance is strong enough to determine the polemical shape, at least, of Langbaum's essays. They are crafted to keep the wolf from the door: they try to reform the *methodological* base of literary studies by returning to the very distinction (between culture and *Kultur*) that radicals decry as a liberal fallacy. One reads with pleasure Langbaum's essay on Tennyson—one savors its close analysis and psychological finesse—but one is nevertheless conscious of it as an ideological drama. It reenacts the speaker's spiritual recovery in *In Memoriam* (after his failure to reconcile science and faith) as *our* recovery. Tennyson, through art, its "dynamic unity" and "epistemological sophistication," becomes an exemplary poet.

Even de Man cannot escape searching for an exemplary text—or perhaps an exemplary textuality. Not to have a text would mean to have to discover oneself as the text, to read oneself perpetually, with the empirical world the mere occasion or held in a kind of suspense. Something is needed to set a bottom for inwardness, to limit an endless and corrosive self-concern. The modern spirit seems strangely medieval in its continual search for role-models and *exempla.* The more critical we get the greater our commitment to this "textual materialism." It is time, therefore, to stress the scandal of literary study: our obstinate bookishness or text-centeredness. Honest literary theory will insist that texts ingest as well as liberate us: not because we are McLuhanite Children of the Book but because the critical reader is always questing for his bible, or some wholly secular meditation.

A Painter's Revelations

EUGÈNE DELACROIX: Selected Letters 1813-1863. *Edited and translated by Jean Stewart. St. Martin's Press. $15.*

Reviewed by ALFRED WERNER

The French art historian, René Huyghe, recently asserted that Eugène Delacroix was "entitled to a place among the great writers of the nineteenth century." This judgment, with which many will agree, was based not on the play and the short narratives he has left, but on his many essays, his *Journal* and his *Letters.* Delacroix, more than anyone else in modern times, refutes the thesis that an artist is bound to fail when he tries to express himself in words. The *Journal*—unabridged and issued in three large volumes decades after the author's death—is known to the English-speaking world through selections that appeared in translation in 1937 and in 1951. His letters, however, have only now been made accessible to us through the admirable efforts of Miss Stewart, who turned

ALFRED WERNER is the author of more than twenty books on art and has lectured at museums all over the country.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The proper study of mankind is books."

— Aldous Huxley in *Chrome Yellow*

For Peace and Justice
Pacifism in America, 1914—1941

CHARLES CHATFIELD Peace was elusive for Americans in the years 1914-1941. Upheaval—much of it violent—characterized many of the nation's internal and external affairs throughout the entire era. Despite this tumultuous atmosphere, the ideology of pacifism effected change on numerous levels. Charles Chatfield here presents the first comprehensive study of American pacifism's rise and course during the period and, in doing so, tells us much about the background of the contemporary peace movement. "...extremely relevant, timely, and consistently interesting."—*Publishers' Weekly*

472 pages, cloth, $11.95

Aldous Huxley's Quest for Values

MILTON BIRNBAUM In this world of shifting values, Aldous Huxley was both a sensitive reflector and an articulate catalyst. Through a perceptive interpretation of Huxley's works, Birnbaum illuminates the English author's moral and intellectual pilgrimage from skeptic to mystic.

244 pages, cloth, $6.95

Samuel Davies,
Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia

GEORGE WILLIAM PILCHER "...a concise and greatly needed study of Samuel Davies as poet, preacher, educator, religious liberal, and major figure of the first Great Awakening...provides interesting and convincing evidence of the active intellectuality of the southern mind in the generation before the American Revolution. This Virginia Presbyterian may, in a dozen ways, well stand comparison with Jonathan Edwards." —Richard Beale Davis, author of *The Intellectual Life of Jefferson's Virginia, 1790-1830* and editor, *The Collected Poems of Samuel Davies*

244 pages, cloth, $9.75

The Image of Lincoln in the South

MICHAEL DAVIS If the North cast Abraham Lincoln as the supreme hero, the South had reasons for fiercely hating his name. Yet as Michael Davis here makes evident, the white South came to accept Lincoln as an authentic American, even uniquely Southern, hero during the period of reunion and reconciliation. "Adds a dimension to our understanding of Lincoln...thoroughly researched...well-written."—Richard N. Current

240 pages, cloth, $7.95

From Your Bookstore or

The University of Tennessee Press
Knoxville 37916

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the highly polished and often poetical language of this thoroughly cultured and educated leader of Romanticism, into fluid and lucid English.

Although we are given here only an extract from the five-volume *Correspondance générale* and the one-volume supplement, *Lettres intimes, correspondance inédite,* it is enough to convince us that their author was not only a profound thinker but also a kindhearted, charming, excitable person, with a sense of humor and a capacity for love. In the *Journal,* reflections on the art of painting predominate. In the letters, certainly not written with any eye to future publication, Delacroix reveals himself to his friends with his "heart laid bare," to use Baudelaire's phrase. Incidentally this poet, who was an ardent admirer of the painter—and author of the most effusive piece of appreciation ever written about him—was one of more than a dozen celebrities with whom the artist exchanged letters. Among the others one finds the writers Balzac, Dumas, Flaubert, Gautier, Hugo, Sainte-Beuve, George Sand and Stendhal, the sculptors David d'Angers and Barye, the painter Ingres, and the composer Chopin. But of these, whose names everyone recognizes, only Sand was an intimate to whom he expressed himself most frankly. His other close friends are now largely forgotten, although nearly all were highly educated men and women, among them his mistress Joséphine Forget and his lifelong friend, Charles Soulier.

The letters start with the fifteen-year-old schoolboy's excited report to a cousin about a stay in an abandoned Benedictine abbey. Half a century later the rich life ends with a short note addressed to another cousin and dictated to his loyal housekeeper (the mortally ill painter had barely the strength to sign it). What lies in between is often so very personal, so direct, so outspoken, as to be almost a substitute for a biography. Anyone who ever thought of the painter as a withdrawn, cool patrician, who reserved his vigor and spontaneity for his pictures, will be surprised to find that in life, too, he could be explosive and passionate.

As a nineteen-year-old, with the help of a dictionary, he composed clumsy English letters to an early sweetheart, his sister's British housemaid (a sample: "You are a cruel person which play afflicting the anothers"). His heart seems to have been bruised repeatedly. To George Sand, whom he addressed, "My kind, kind, kind friend," he wrote: " . . . there is no such thing as peaceful friendship, any more than peaceful love; it is a passion like love," assuring her, on another occasion, that he was not in love with her fame: "It's yourself, the contents of your beloved petticoats." The beautiful Madame de Forget, who was alienated from her husband, might have made the ideal wife for him, had circumstances permitted. Would Delacroix, who called her "my kind dearest," or "my good darling," have made a tolerably good husband? Seemingly he was too much "chained to his galley," to use his description of his incessant work in his studio, to be able to discharge the obligations of a family man. The astute Madame de Forget knew it, for she wrote him, as quoted by Mr. John Russell in the introduction, "You devote yourself entirely to your painting, it is your strongest passion, your ruling one, and nothing and no one can replace it," and also, "I have come to realize that you have no need of the comforts and solaces which serve so many people."

The man who at twenty-two exclaimed, "Painting is life itself," was not a recluse, however, even apart from his amorous alliances. He liked to dine with Stendhal, Mérimée, Musset; he sought membership in the *Institut de France* and wore its uniform proudly. On the other hand, he loathed most of the diversions eagerly followed by members of his own upper middle class. He disliked hunting ("Decidedly, shooting is a pastime that doesn't suit me"). He was disgusted with social gatherings: "The few evening parties to which I go out of habit, seeking entertainment and finding boredom, end by exhausting me completely. More often than not I'm monopolized by some ninny who talks a lot of nonsense to me about painting." By contrast: "As soon as I was out in the country, amidst peasants and oxen and, in short,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

By special agreement, Syracuse University Press is now the distributor in the Western Hemisphere and Hawaii for books published by the AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, Lebanon

These books have not been available previously from an American source. All of the books are in English, and represent some of the most important scholarly publishing in the Middle East. They are known as AUB Publications. Orders will be shipped promptly from Syracuse University Press

Among the titles now available are:

- AGRICULTURE

  Man, Food, and Agriculture in the Middle East.
  Thomas S. Stickley and others, editors.
  692 pages. 1969. SBN 8156-6015-4
  $10.00

- ARCHAEOLOGY

  The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations.
  William A. Ward, editor.
  152 pages, illustrated. 1968.
  SBN 8156-6011-1 $8.00

- BIOGRAPHY

  The Life and Works of Ibn Qutayba
  by Ishaq Musa Husseini.
  106 pages. 1950.
  SBN 8156-6027-8 Paper, $2.00

- BOTANY

  The Weeds of Lebanon
  by Winnie Edgecombe.
  500 pages, 214 plates. 1970.
  SBN 8156-6001-4 Paper, $8.00

- ECONOMICS

  Foreign Trade of the Middle East: Instability and Growth, 1946 - 1962
  by Joseph Coppock.
  255 pages. 1966.
  SBN 8156-6022-7 Paper, $5.00

- ENGINEERING

  Engineering and Architecture and the Future Environment of Man.
  Friedrich Ragette, editor.
  305 pages. 1968.
  SBN 8156-6013-8 Paper, $5.00

- GEOGRAPHY

  The Lebanon and Phoenicia: Ancient Texts Illustrating Their Physical Geography and Native Industries.
  Vol. I: The Physical Setting and the Forest.
  John Pairman Brown, compiler, translator, annotator.
  220 pages. 1969. SBN 8156-6014-6
  $10.00

- LITERATURE

  Mikhail Naimy, an Introduction.
  by Nadeem N. Naimy.
  350 pages. 1967.
  SBN 8156-6028-6 Paper, $4.50

- MEDICINE

  Hitti's English-Arabic Medical Dictionary.
  by Yusuf K. Hiffi.
  758 pages. 1967. SBN 8156-6004-9
  $16.00

- PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

  God and Man in Contemporary Christian Thought.
  Charles Malik, editor.
  131 pages. 1970.
  SBN 8156-6016-2 Paper, $5.00

  The Refinement of Character, by Abi Ali Ahmad Ben Mohammad Miskawayh
  Constantine Zurayk, translator.
  220 pages. 1968. SBN 8156-6012-X
  $8.00

- POLITICAL STUDIES

  The Political Doctrine of Al-Baqillani
  by Yusuf Ibish.
  208 pages. 1966. SBN 8156-6029-4
  $5.00

The complete list of AUB Publications is available on request from
Syracuse University Press
Syracuse, New York 13210

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

things that were natural, I regained possession of myself, I enjoyed life."

As a young man, Delacroix journeyed to England, later to North Africa. In his middle years, he visited Holland and Belgium (but he never saw Italy and its treasures). His evaluations of other countries, other nations, show great perceptiveness as well as bias. About London: "The vastness of this city is inconceivable. The bridges over the river are out of sight of one another. What shocked me most was the absence of anything that we call architecture." About the British: "This nation has something fierce and savage in its blood which comes out horribly in the rabble, who are hideous ruffians." He was not all negative, though: "Their government is excellent. Liberty, here, is not an empty word. Aristocratic pride and class distinctions are carried to a point that I find infinitely shocking; but these have certain good results." His lengthy stay in Morocco, which resulted in the creation of some of his most lively and stirring oils and in many descriptive pages in the *Journal,* was, perhaps, the high spot of his travels: "I'm like a man in a dream, seeing things he's afraid will vanish from him." He admired the natives: "These people possess only a single blanket, in which they walk about, sleep or are buried, and they look as satisfied as Cicero must have been in his curule chair."

Observations on painting in general, and on his own work are less frequent than one might expect. He was most explicit on the subject of art in a long letter addressed to the editor of *L'Artiste,* who had asked for his opinion of competitions for paintings and sculpture. The artist was very firm in his disapproval:

> The artistic imagination, Sir, is not a shameless hussy who accepts contempt as readily as the tumultuous applause of a theatre, who exhibited herself before an audience in order to win its condescending favors . . . The artist, confined to his studio, works at first with inspiration and full of that sincere confidence which alone can produce masterpieces; but should he happen to glance outside and see the mountebanks' stage on which he must appear and the judges waiting for him, immediately his impulse dies down.

As that demonstrates, he insisted on the proud status of the artist, and this in an age in which, without the support of state and church, and with little encouragement by the bourgeoisie, creative men were often reduced to impecunious wretches. At one point even Delacroix, the son of a high official (although his real father is believed to have been the great Talleyrand) temporarily suffered from poverty: "I haven't a penny," he once confessed to George Sand. Yet he always kept his head high, and never stopped considering the practice of art one of the noblest occupations of man. He described painting as "nature transmitted to the soul without an intermediary, without a veil, without rules or conventions." He urged a colleague to devote to painting "every moment that you can spare from your duties or from remembering your friends." He chided an art historian friend, who later became curator of paintings in the Louvre, for being in low spirits:

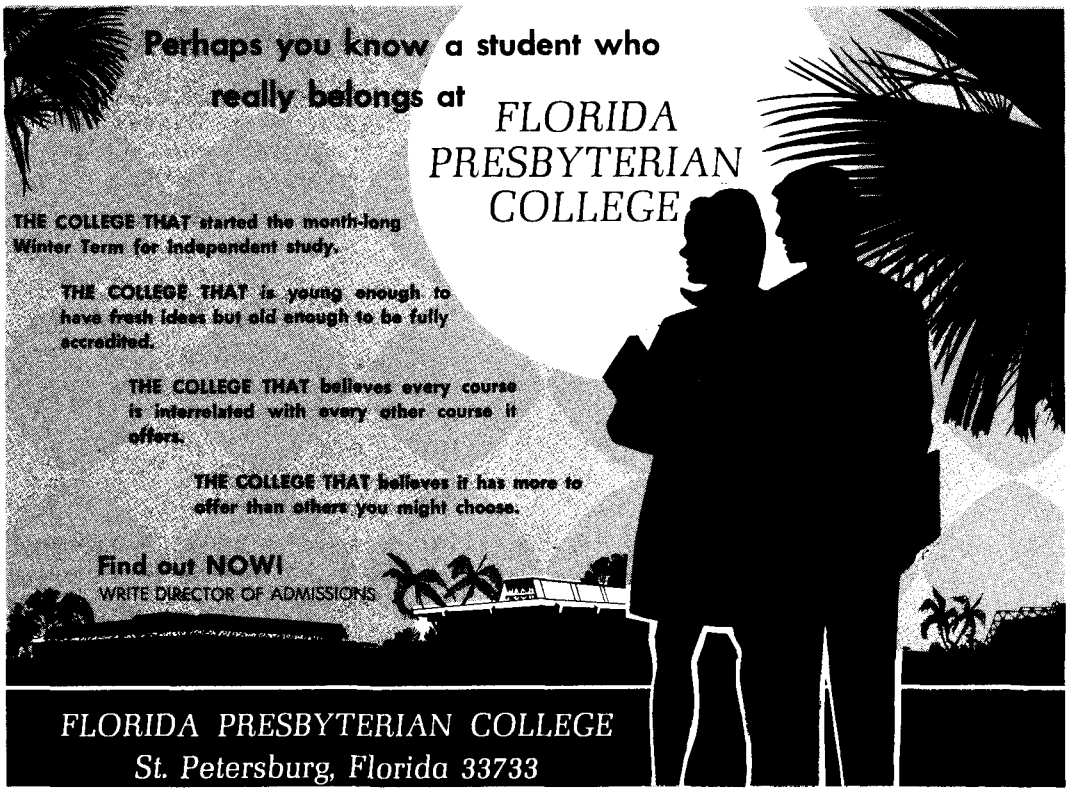
> Would you choose to be one of those blockheads who spend all day drinking, or go hunting from morning till night? Could you spend your days in a bank, or among the speculators in the Stock Exchange? Would you sacrifice a single lofty pleasure for all the ignoble delights of those wingless animals?

Once or twice he wrote about his wish to marry, and to have children. But somehow, despite his yearning for tenderness and his seeming ability to exude warmth, he hesitated to bind himself to any woman, fearing that such a relationship would interfere with what he treasured most, the free exercise of his craft. Eventually at fifty-five the confirmed bachelor, who had still a decade of life ahead, summed up his final choice:

> Living alone, and deprived of great joys, but also free from the sometimes excessive griefs which one suffers through members of one's own family, I have plenty of time to give to that art which will delight me as long as I live.

This richly annotated, well-illustrated volume will offer much pleasure to the reader who seeks more than factual infor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



mation, and who will return to Delacroix's pictures with a fuller understanding of the man who created them.

An Interior Journey

IMAGES AND SHADOWS. *By Iris Origo. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book. $8.50.*

Reviewed by ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

Anyone who has read Iris Origo's scholarly biographies will not be surprised to find in her memoirs beauty of writing, acuteness of perception, precision and vividness of detail. And those who know something of her public life will expect to see the romantic landscapes and well-known writers and intellectuals that are glimpsed in these pages. The chapter on the craft of writing itself, particularly the backstage of biography, is a joy, but again not an unexpected one.

In reality these serene pages take their warmth and meaning from something much more universal than the outward experiences of a very gifted person brought up in a quite special and rarified atmosphere of the early 1900s in Europe and America.

One finds that, like E. M. Forster, whom she quotes, Iris Origo believes: "The true history of the human race is the story of human affections." And her book expresses this truth in countless ways as she records her affection for people, not necessarily famous, for children, of others as well as her own, for landscapes and houses, for books, for work, both physical and intellectual, for gardens and other delights.

But the history of the human race is the story not only of human affections but also of human failings, difficulties and sorrows, and the manner in which human beings surmount them.

The first difficulty the writer had to surmount was one that she speaks of as "the barrier of privilege," which, especially in

✪ ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH has lived in both America and Europe. She is the author of a number of books, including several of autobiographical and reflective writing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her youth, she felt insulated her from life around her.

It was no accident but a deliberate choice, requiring courage, faith and energy that took her over this first hurdle, when she decided to make her life in Italy and spent the early years of her marriage reclaiming with her husband the abandoned and neglected farmlands of Val d' Orcia. It was in these restored farms at the time of the Second World War that their home became a refuge for the ill, the hungry, the wounded, as well as—far more dangerous for an Englishwoman in Mussolini's Italy—an asylum for hunted partisans, fugitive allied soldiers, prisoners of war, and Jews escaping from Fascist authorities.

What holds the reader finally is not so much the exterior circumstances, places or events of this life as the interior journey from the insulated childhood to participation in the universal suffering of a modern war world and a vigorous concern for its alleviation. The journey is described quite simply and honestly—at times, one feels, almost unconsciously. One is gradually let in to a particular life story, which, illumined as it is with wisdom and wit, compassion and reconciliation with life and its partings, is the kind that "keeps mankind from despair."

In Search of the Sacred

THE WILD PRAYER OF LONGING: Poetry and the Sacred. *By Nathan A. Scott, Jr. Yale University Press. $6.75.*

Reviewed by RICHARD W. NOLAND

Nathan A. Scott, Jr., is certainly one of the best-known, most prolific, and finest practitioners of theological criticism in America. No one doing theological criticism is in a very enviable position, especially if he is both a theologian (as Scott is) and a sensitive, deeply read student of literature. On the one hand, he must deal with a largely secular tradition that may or may not express his own vision of man and the world without abandoning his theological commitments. Like a nineteenth-century liberal theologian, he must maintain that fine line between capitulating and accommodating to the secular world. On the other hand, he must treat literary works and the vision they express in their own terms, without imposing his beliefs onto or reading them into a given author. And no matter what he does, he is open to attacks from all sides—from fellow theologians who claim that he has yielded too much, or (as recently happened to Scott) too little, of his own theological position to the secular world, and from literary scholars and critics who are fearful of interdisciplinary approaches to literature and sensitive to the slightest distortion of an author's work.

Scott is aware of all of these dangers, and, in general, he does remarkably well (he is, of course, not always successful) in avoiding the usual pitfalls. One of his greatest strengths is that he has never attempted to create a rigid, all-encompassing theological poetics to which all literary works must conform. Some of his work is theoretical (such as the essays on comedy and tragedy in *The Broken Center),* but he always presents his position as tentative and open, not final and closed. Another of his strengths is that, like Lionel Trilling (whom he very much admires), he is highly sensitive in his ability to perceive what it is that literature tells us about man's present cultural and spiritual situation. This in turn means that he listens openly to all kinds of literature. Instead of trying to say what literature should be doing, he tries to say what it really is doing and what that means in terms of the life of our time.

Such is the case with his latest work, *The Wild Prayer of Longing,* which, although not so long or inclusive as such previous works as *The Broken Center, Craters of the Spirit,* or *Negative Capability,* is a perfect example of Scott in his role of cultural diagnostician. Of the book's three chapters, the first is an account of the loss by modern man of what Scott calls (after Erich Auerbach) the figural imagina-

✪ RICHARD W. NOLAND teaches English at the University of Massachusetts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WITH THE END OF THE MODERN AGE —WHAT REMAINS?

Ask today's important questions — about love, ideals, peace — and the computers fall silent, the test tubes do not react.

For science no longer promises the certainty it once did. While it has opened up vast new areas of comprehension and achievement — it has also revealed man's limitations. And its own.

Man cannot know all, science cannot control all. And the growing realization that this is so marks the end, in Wheelis' view, of the modern age.

"With clarity and simplicity, [he] sums up the emergence of a new era in which 'the advancing edge of science warns that absolute truth is fiction' and the 'awe and wonder' with which primitive men, poets and sages view the world must be ascendant values."*

This is "a beguiling excursion through the labyrinths of intellectual history."† It is "astonishingly jargon-free"* and written by a novelist-philosopher-psychoanalyst who "possesses a rare gift of synthesis elevated by vision and feeling."* $5.95

** Publishers' Weekly † The Kirkus Reviews*

THE END OF THE MODERN AGE

by Allen Wheelis

BASIC BOOKS, INC.

404 Park Ave. So., New York 10016

When superficial answers are not enough.

The distinguished new book by

M.H. ABRAMS

Natural Supernaturalism

Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature

"THE spiritual dilemma at the heart of German and English Romanticism is here brilliantly explained and illustrated; thus this book is the most significant contribution to Romantic Studies since René Wellek's *The Romantic Age* and Abrams' own *The Mirror and the Lamp*. The major Romantic poets and philosophers internalized the traditional Christian apocalyptic vision of history . . . and applied it to the political, imaginative, and spiritual revolution of their times . . . Thanks to Abrams' book, our view of Romanticism is more keenly focused."—HUBERT F. BABINSKI, *Library Journal*. 666 pages. $10.00

Norton

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion; the second is an attempt to define the sacramental vision; and the third is a study of Theodore Roethke as an example of a modern poet who achieves genuine sacramentation.

The figural imagination, Scott says, was essentially a legacy of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Its vision of the unity of history, of the continuum to which all persons and events belong, and of historical existence (no matter how lowly or apparently insignificant) as a *figura* of the supernatural was based on a belief in the sovereignty and providence of God. Thus, "the Christian vision of God's providence as overruling the world from its beginning to its end enabled Dante and the people of the Middle Ages to take for granted the essential unity of the human story." With the Renaissance there appeared the tendency of "abrogating traditional conceptions of human existence as vertically related to a transcendent reality"—a tendency that continued and gained in momentum through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the early years of the nineteenth century, Scott says, "a climate of sensibility had arisen in which human life would be regarded as totally embedded within the objective system of historical circumstances and unrelated to any reality transcending the stress of temporal process." Such a position was, and remains, the characteristic view of modern man. In modern literature, Scott sees this position as leading to two different fallacies—the Realistic Fallacy, which simply conceives the world as bare, external fact of no radical significance, and the Angelic Fallacy, which seeks to "create a kind of absolute poetry that will in no way be dependent upon the received material of nature and history." For Scott, the important point is that in neither case is there anything left that can be called sacramental, for in one case reality is found wholly in inert fact, in the other reality is found wholly in human subjectivity.

This defiguralization of the world is, in Scott's view, at the heart of a fundamental dilemma of modernity—that is, the pervasive sense on man's part that the world "has somehow been divested of holiness, that no longer is it available on the terms of any kind of intimacy. . . ." His primary concern in this book, then, is to discover ways in which man seems to be trying to rehumanize his environment. And he offers three examples of such an attempt. First, there is the evidence of what Scott calls (after Lévi-Strauss) the rebirth of savage thought, which, in literature, drama (such as Happenings), painting, music and politics, is a "searching for ways of reconceiving the human universe as a world which offers the promise and possibility of life under the law of participation." Second, there is the work of Martin Heidegger, who has attempted to articulate a "sacramental vision of reality" that is not dependent on a supernatural conception. For Heidegger, Being is the "primal energy which gathers things into themselves and so keeps them thus assembled that they can stand out before the gaze of intelligence." And it is the poet, according to Heidegger, who can most fully reveal Being to man, for poetic art, "by inviting an attitude of enthrallment before the various concrete realities of the world, prepares us to be laid hold of by that wherewith these things are inwardly constituted and enabled to be what they are—which is none other than Being itself." Scott concludes with a chapter on Roethke, as an example of such a poetic art. Scott sees Roethke's central quality as a "profound sense of all earthly reality as invested with a power and pressure and as touched by a kind of glory that make it man's principal obligation to offer, in turn, a humble *pietas* as his primary response to the mysteriousness with which all created things reflect the splendid fecundity and holiness of Being."

The argument of this book is typical of Scott's way of working. Keeping his own theological views as much in the background as possible, he examines literature and other art forms for what they reveal about man's spiritual health or illness and for any literary or other artistic developments that may help in man's search for spiritual wholeness. It is this latter impulse, especially, that allows him to approach

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Pursuit of Relevance

by Herbert J. Muller
320 pages $10.00

Are the humanities still "relevant" in the age of the bomb and the computer? An open-minded discussion of pressing current dilemmas.

Predicament of the University

by Henry David Aiken
416 pages $11.95

An iconoclastic critique of modern educational ideals. "Capably written and strongly favoring philosophy and the voice of youth."—*Library Journal*

Doing History

By J. H. Hexter
320 pages
cloth $6.95 paper $2.95

An independent and refreshing analysis of the historian's craft with special emphasis on the historian as writer.

through your bookstore or **Indiana University Press**
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

A modern master evaluates a poet of the past

Robert Penn Warren

John Greenleaf Whittier's Poetry
An Appraisal and a Selection

A major critic, novelist, and poet selects 36 poems and reassesses the significance for our times of the once enormously popular New England poet. Warren compares Whittier with Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, and Faulkner and concludes that "His star belongs in their constellation."
Cloth $8.95 Paper $2.95

At your bookseller or from
University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis 55455

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hans Christian Andersen and the Romantic Theatre: *a study of stage practices in the prenaturalistic scandinavian theatre*

FREDERICK J. MARKER
Andersen's dramatic works constitute a microcosm of important nineteenth-century styles. His sense of practical theatre was keen and the history of the production of his plays affords an unparalleled panorama of the popular components of the colourful, romantic stage picture. 40 illus. $10.00

Thackeray: *the major novels*

JULIET MCMASTER
Concentrating on his best work, Juliet McMaster approaches Thackeray's novels through his use of irony and ambiguity. She contends that he is a brilliant and subtle writer and a highly sophisticated ironist, and she reveals the dramatic coherence and artistic integrity of his works. $7.50

French Individualist Poetry, 1686-1760: *an anthology*

ROBERT FINCH and EUGÈNE JOLIAT
This is the first time a representative collection of poems by this group has been made available for the general reader. Each work is analysed critically and a general introduction situates the poets in their period. $12.50

University of Toronto Press
33 East Tupper Street, Buffalo, NY 14203

literary trends and writers—avant-garde movements of all kinds (in this book the various literary, cinematic, musical and artistic works that he understands as the necessary rebirth of savage thought), writers such as Beckett, Kafka, Robbe-Grillet, William Carlos Williams and Faulkner—with a sympathy and insight denied to theological critics who can only see them as willful expressions of an antireligious sensibility.

Still, there are problems, and one of them has to do with Scott's method of practical criticism. Scott tends to look for the essential quality of any writer in a theme that he can adapt to theological purposes. In doing so, he often fails to deal with the concreteness and complexity of a given writer's psychological experience and total vision. A case in point is Roethke, who is for Scott above all the poet of sacramentality. Yet the content of much of Roethke's poetry (especially the "Lost Son" poems) is a complicated attempt to come to terms with his family and early childhood experience and with the development of his own identity. Scott refers to this aspect of Roethke's poetry only in passing, and the end result is that his discussion has the effect of abstracting Roethke's sacramentalism from the rest of his experience—a very curious thing to happen to such a concrete idea. Scott seems to me to be much better when dealing with theoretical material or when writing broadly of cultural events that involve large numbers of artists than he is when treating a specific author.

In this book, however, there is also a problem in Scott's general position. And the problem is that the theological implications of the book are unclear. If his position lies somewhere between the total surrender to secularism of the death-of-God theologians (as Scott argues here and elsewhere) and the outmoded orthodoxy of traditional theology, then what, in terms of theological rather than poetic commitment, exactly is it? I do not mean that I require of Scott a fully articulated theology based, say, on Heidegger's metaphysics (although he does seem to be moving in some such direction). But I do mean that Scott leaves unclear just what it is that makes the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

secularism of his own position different from the total secularism of the death-of-God theologians. The answer, I suppose, lies in his insistence that Heidegger's (and Roethke's) conception of Being is not pantheistic. And the theological difficulty is that it is obviously very hard to formulate the transcendence of a Being who is so radically immanent. Indeed, that is clearly the great theological task of the rest of this century. In the meantime, however, Scott is, as it were, interpreting certain works of literature on the basis of an as yet nonexistent theology, and that is bound to make for some confusion in following the drift of his thought.

Scott's answer to these comments, I suspect, would be that such a theology will evolve only very slowly, if at all. In the interim (as he says in *Negative Capability*), "the Christian enterprise, as it seeks to make contact with the living reality of its human environment, may find in literary art a most helpful resource." This is clearly the aim of Scott's own work, and we are fortunate to have a man who pursues it with such intelligence and seriousness of purpose.

Edmund Wilson at Talcottville

UPSTATE: Records and Recollections of Northern New York. *By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $8.95.*

Reviewed by LEWIS M. DABNEY

In the early 1950s, when many American writers were preoccupied with their native roots, Edmund Wilson began spending summers in the upstate New York countryside he had loved in boyhood, in the old stone house that had come down in his mother's family. While some contributed to symposia on "our country and our cul-

✪ LEWIS M. DABNEY, who teaches English at Vassar College, is finishing a study of Faulkner's Indian stories. He has written about Edmund Wilson in *Private Dealings*, a collection of essays on American writers, of which he is coauthor.

EQUAL JUSTICE:

THE WARREN ERA OF THE SUPREME COURT

by Arthur J. Goldberg

In reflecting on the achievements of the Warren Court, former Justice Goldberg points to the major changes in the form of political democracy in the United States wrought by the Court through its landmark criminal justice decisions. Looking ahead, Goldberg warns: "One of the most crucial challenges facing the Supreme Court today—indeed, confronting our entire system of courts and justice—is the need to make our declared principles, our constitutional protections, into a workable and working reality for those to whom they must often seem to be the sheerest of illusion and promissory deception."

$4.50

MUSIC IN THE CULTURED GENERATION

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF MUSIC IN AMERICA, 1870–1900

by Joseph A. Mussulman

Professor Mussulman considers the music of the latter part of the nineteenth century in terms of the values of the most influential arbiters of musical taste at that time, the writers and readers of *Atlantic, Harper's,* the *Century,* and *Scribner's.* He identifies the social context of this music and describes the vigorous and fascinating musical life of the Cultured Generation. *Pi Kappa Lambda Studies in American Music.*

$9.75

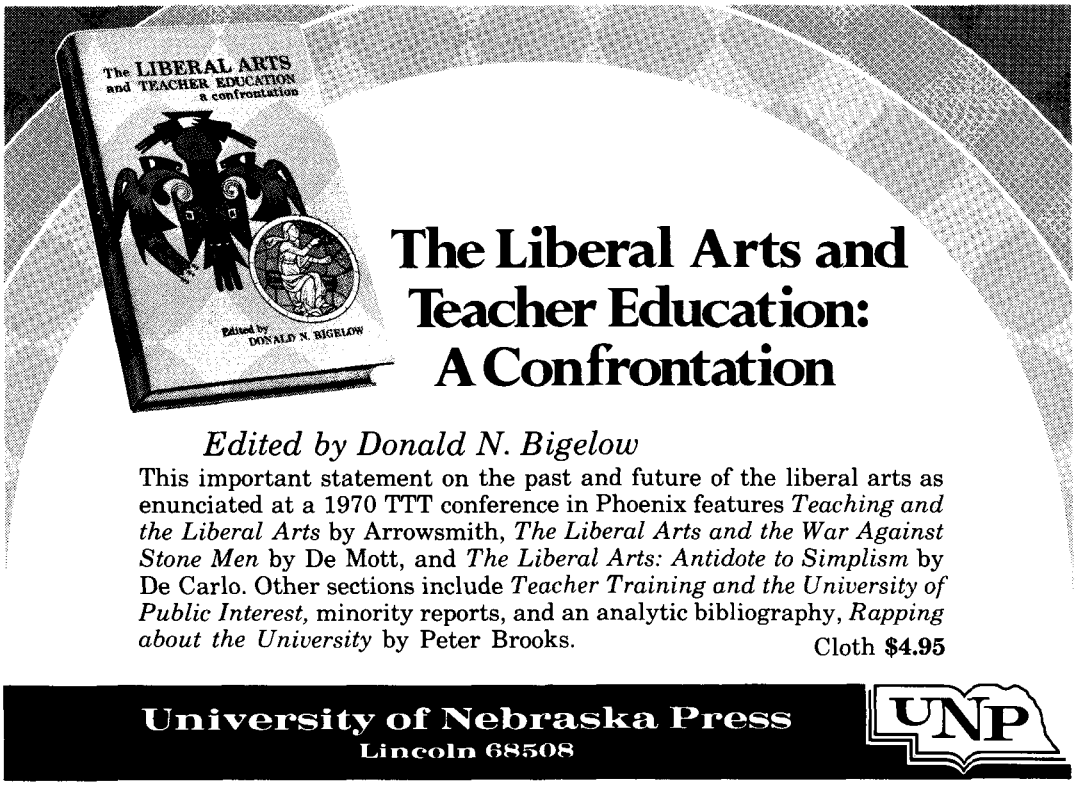
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS
1735 Benson Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ture," Wilson had his own past to explore. The fine essay, "The Author at Sixty," largely about his father, made the old house in Talcottville a symbol of integrity in the gray Eisenhower years. His heritage there, going back to the eighteenth century, filled out the old-fashioned Americanism, progressive and rationalistic, Puritan in its sense of stewardship, that had balanced his commitment to the avant-garde in art and politics. Talcottville was Wilson's continuity with the republic he mourned and brought to life in *Patriotic Gore,* the work in which the American celebration of the fifties finds its justification. His tax pamphlet and his studies of the Indians, Canadian culture, and local writers like Harold Frederic, derive from northern New York.

Upstate, a companion piece to all this writing, is drawn from his diaries of twenty summers in and out of Talcottville, with a prologue, an introductory excursion in regional and family history, an epilogue summing up where he stands now. Despite the enthusiasm with which the book has been reviewed, it is not major Wilson, and the later parts document what he calls his waning powers. But it is much richer than the *New Yorker* selections, which emphasized nature descriptions, local people, and the wear of aging, omitting all the longer passages on the cultural and social scene. In *Upstate* such passages complement Wilson's pleasure in bringing the old house alive and in the landscape, his expeditions to view the novelties of the region. We see the magic of the upstate scene wear off as he learns more about it, a pattern found in much of his work.

It has not been pointed out that *Axel's Castle* and *To the Finland Station* reflect long cycles of engagement and withdrawal, that Wilson's first enthusiasm fades while he comes to grips with symbolist literature and Marxist history. The magazine pieces that went into each book show how he attained critical balance, working out opposed tendencies in himself and in the times. A similar process is involved in the essays on the theme of the wound and the bow. In Wilson's Russian journal of 1935 we see him oscillating between idealism and dis-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enchantment, as he sometimes does in the New York diaries.

Essentially these record the fulfillment of a dream of Talcottville in one decade and its erosion by the grimmer realities of the next. It is a characteristic rhythm of American culture. In 1957 he tells how he has had his friends carve their poetry in the glass of the windows of the stone house, how Stephen Spender's "I think continually of those who were truly great . . ." is placed to catch the afternoon sun at the top of the stairs. By 1969 two of the panes with poems on them have been smashed by the local motorcycle gang, and the country road beside the house is about to be transformed into another four-lane highway. The present violence of American life reinforces Wilson's disillusionment, as do old age and ill health.

The prologue looks back to the boyhood joy of summer family reunions in a land of rivers, hills and lofty skies, which gave him perspective on the wealthy New Jersey suburbs where he grew up, much as Quincy summers distanced Henry Adams from Boston. He recalls the place where he realized he was "not quite a poet, but . . . something of the kind." Now the family ghosts who had drawn him back have faded, and he sits alone among shelves of books and little treasures from the past.

As Hilton Kramer said so well in the New York *Times*, there is a deep and abiding strain of family piety in Wilson's work both as a critic and a memorialist of American life. And, on the other hand, the public commitment feeds the personal. The story of his Talcottville ancestry is one he once outlined in verse, beginning when "Priest Kimball" brought his Mather bride from New England into the wilderness, "and preached hellfire from Leyden Hill—/The corn, it's said, can't freeze there still." The Talcotts, Tories in the Revolution, built the place and held onto it and to their domain until a spinster heiress married Wilson's great-grandfather Baker, who "broke and sold the Talcott acres":

> He built the town, became its boss,
> And in the legislature sat,
> A rude Jacksonian democrat.

VIOLENCE

The Crisis of American Confidence

Edited by Hugh Davis Graham

Associate Editors, Stephen Paul Mahinka and Dean William Rudoy

American society faces a wave of violence that threatens to overwhelm it. In *Violence* some of America's leading spokesmen—**Milton S. Eisenhower, Henry Steele Commager, Earl Warren, Gerald R. Ford, Herbert G. Klein, Ramsey Clark, Quinn Tamm, Jerome Frank, Leon Higginbotham, David Brinkley, Charles Frankel, Howard Zinn, John Gardner**—give their views on this crisis in American confidence. *$8.50 cloth, $2.25 paper*

THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

THE GENESIS OF THE FRONTIER THESIS

A Study in Historical Creativity
by RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON

The reader is invited to follow the progress of a major creative venture, Frederick Jackson Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," first read as a paper at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Dr. Billington draws on the rich Turner material in the Huntington Library, and includes five groups of correspondence in which Turner himself, in later years, gives his version of the way his frontier thesis evolved. **$8.50**

Huntington Library Publications
SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA 91108

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Upstate goes on into the generation before Wilson's, through the memoir of his Talcott cousin Dorothy Mendenhall, a distinguished doctor and formidable person, whom he had admired in his youth. She was a feminist who liked to charm men when not putting them down, and when visiting Talcottville relatives in her eighties could remark that the company of a genius must be difficult. Her figure leads to the diary, where she also appears.

The backdrop is of New York's feudal tradition and rough frontier democracy, and the curious religious sects in which Wilson is always interested. Theme is less important here than personality and anecdote, into which he still projects himself. He writes amusingly of the ten-foot Cardiff Giant, a hoax on the idea of a petrified man, burlesquing its now deteriorated state, legs broken at the knees, eroded genitals and toes. It suggests "an overwhelming compulsion to create some superhuman being to walk these New York State hills where the word of God has not been spoken." As F. W. Dupee has said, Wilson is a modified Nietzschean. During a visit I once paid him in Talcottville, he began the days with a Hebrew invocation, which he translated "Be strong, be strong, let us keep ourselves strong."

Other than his travel journalism, the New York diary-notebooks are the first part to appear of the enormous chronicle he has kept since the 1920s. This form suits his inveterate nominalism, his attempt to see things one by one in their individual nature. The writing is always a clear glass, as Auden said in commending Wilson's prose. It is often fresh, with a pleasing rhythm, free and easy yet sharp, and even when it seems just an exercise, it registers a variety of experience and reflection. He involves himself in experience by recording it, with a savoring eye for detail.

When, however, we read of the village next to Talcottville, "You are really in old Lowville here," we cannot but miss old Moscow or Jerusalem, and look forward to Wilson's chronicles of more literary milieus, some of which may not be publishable for many years. Except for the background of books and work, *Upstate* could be anyone's summer journal—Nabokov is the only figure mentioned who can match Wilson's authority. He exchanges visits and dinners within a changing circle of friends. He has an appetite for simple people, especially women, who attract him and whose lives he can enter into. Mary Pcolar, his teacher of Hungarian and faithful attendant in the 1960s, is distantly related to the Ukrainian Anna of *Memoirs of Hecate County*. The author of this novel and *I Thought of Daisy* is still breaking out of his class and of literary isolation, while enjoying a modestly seigneurial position in the stone house.

The isolation remains. Seldom companioned by his family—his relationship with his wife is treated from the point of view of her inability to enjoy Talcottville —he records shrewd but severe judgments of his peers, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Nabokov, Van Wyck Brooks, and largely rejects the contemporary world. His restless curiosity implies a certain detachment, and this is reinforced by the critic's eighteenth-century ideal of equanimity, appreciativeness, restraint. His stronger emotions are themselves rather eighteenth-century—the pleasure in the house and setting, the sense of decline and fall in the later pages.

His romance with northern New York is conveyed in the very old-fashioned landscapes of the fifties. They go back to his boyhood sense of the grandeur and openness of the countryside, which over the years he has associated with the lonely lives of the pioneers from New England. "Nobler country here, which, I think, has made nobler people," he writes as late as 1958. In this Wordsworthian vein he pictures cloudscapes, the quality of light, flowers in the fields and crowding the remoter roadsides. An old botanist, he seeks out a rare and lovely orchid, but also the insect-eating pitcher plant. He takes us to the spot where an underground river gushes out of the hillside. The creviced terrain and abandoned mill and farm, the artful, detailed unfolding of the glen, the stream and falls, all contribute to an eighteenth-century wildness and charm.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ten years later he grimly sketches the destruction of the dry river bed nearby for stone for the new highway, the work of local people who are less than noble. Talcottville is now part of the America the rest of us live in. The darker aspects of a depressed provincial life are matched with glimpses of pornography and racial violence in the cities, bombers taking off toward Russia every morning from the nearby air base at Rome, New York. In 1935, even as Wilson proclaimed Moscow "the moral top of the world, where the light never really goes out," he began accumulating evidence to the contrary. When the older man "confronts," as others have, "the policies of the lying governments, the stupidity of applied ideologies, the competition for 'success' and 'status,'" he sounds like Priest Kimball without hellfire to threaten.

The epilogue cites the low state of man's evolution, which one sometimes thinks is Wilson's rationalistic euphemism for Mark Twain's damned human race. Discounting, perhaps insufficiently, his own bias as "a member of a once privileged class which is being eliminated all over the world," he maintains equanimity. But as a humanist he is discouraged. He takes us through a local monument to the transience of our endeavors, Hyde-Clark Hall, biggest and bleakest of various buildings through which *Upstate* evokes the past in New York, contrasting its attempted feudal splendor and present grotesque decay. We are far from the stone house here, and he tells us he has even thought of selling the place, and of "calling it a day."

Wilson has great resilience. He has been making his adieus for a generation while producing at a rate that few can match. Before *Patriotic Gore* he was feeling his age, and in its aftermath in 1962 he spoke of reaching the point "when good Americans die and go to Paris." The difference now is physical. At the end of the diary he has had a heart attack, angina, a malaria dating from his Haitian journey, as well as radical dentistry, and is reduced to working, eating and sleeping in the same room, going upstairs only once a day. The vigorous reviews and essays of the last several years almost belie these illnesses. One hears of his awaited Russian book, and of arrangements for the publication of the journals in England, and that he has had a stroke.

There is, then, a sense of finality with which the admirer of Wilson reads the ending of *Upstate,* for the celebration of new experience and the disillusionment that establishes perspective are unlikely to repeat themselves on such a scale. The book lacks great importance, but it has its own value alongside Wilson's enduring work. We are reminded that he starts not far ahead of the rest of us, that his achievement, comparable to that of any man of letters this country has produced, is owed not to genius but to appetite for literature and life, to intelligence, and discipline. From *Upstate* his countrymen may learn, in the language a romanticizing Wilson once used of Lenin and the Russian people, "that he was one of them, that he summoned from their sluggish plasm all those triumphs to which life must rise and to which he thought himself but a guidepost."

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (Act of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

1. Title of publication, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR; 2. Date of Filing, October 25, 1971; 3. Frequency of Issue, Quarterly—March, June, October, December; 4. Location of Known Office of Publication, 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, Va. 23228; 5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers, 1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20009.

6. Names and Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher, The United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20009; Editor, Hiram Haydn, 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017; Managing Editor, Mary Moore Molony, 1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20009.

7. Owner: The United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009; No stockholders.

8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders ing or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None.

9. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run)	50,035	49,646
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	785	500
2. Mail Subscriptions	44,581	43,691
C. Total Paid Circulation	45,366	44,191
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means		
1. Samples, Complimentary, and other Free Copies	2,042	1,450
2. Copies distributed to News Agents, but not Sold	237	187
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	47,654	45,828
F. Office Use, Left-Over, Spoiled After Printing	2,390	3,818
G. Total (Sum of E & F should equal net press run shown in A)	50,035	49,646

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Dorothy B. Kerr

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

Your Autumn issue seemed especially pertinent to the Young Women's Christian Association's major concentration for 1971-1973, the elimination of racism by any means necessary. As librarian to the National Board of the Y.W.C.A., I thank you for making this well-timed and high-quality coverage available.

ELIZABETH D. NORRIS
New York, New York

* * *

The special issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR dealing with crime and punishment looks like an extremely interesting compilation, and we are grateful for the addition to our library. Since the Select Committee on Crime, of which I am chairman, contemplates going into the general subject of penal reform, this should be especially helpful.

CLAUDE PEPPER
U. S. House of Representatives

* * *

This letter proposes that the two hundreth anniversary of the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence of the American colonies be celebrated by the promulgation July 4, 1976, of a Declaration of *Inter*dependence of all peoples.

It would seem appropriate at a time when the United States has developed from a small nation to a nation of world stature, and when many, if not most, other peoples have won political independence or are in the process of doing so, that the emphasis in world affairs should be changed from political independence to human interdependence, from political values to humane values, to those natural attributes that underlie all human aspiration and action—regardless of nationality, race, color, religion, economic and technological development or of political systems.

I suggest that the bicentennial of the Revolution thus be celebrated not merely by another world's fair or flexing of our muscles, but by another revolution, this time necessarily nonviolent, for the announced purpose of emphasizing brotherhood above nationhood. This would go beyond the political basis of the United Nations and yet support the statement of rights written into the U.N. charter—as well as into the Bill of Rights—by an explication of the core values of humanity.

Since human values are the special field of study of scholars, as in aesthetics, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics and many other humanistic disciplines, it would seem appropriate to invite such scholars around the world to draft their own regional statements as a preliminary to the drafting of a single document, the Declaration of Interdependence, at a convocation in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, in 1976.

I have already sent this slight but potentially momentous proposal in somewhat different form to the White House, which passed it on for consideration by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, and to the Philadelphia *Bulletin,* whose managing editor replied that while the newspaper has already received many suggestions for the bicentennial celebration, this one is an "exciting" one. I am now sending it simultaneously to the editors of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and of *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* because the first is addressed to scholars in general, and the second is concerned with my personal field of interest.

One further suggestion might be made: since, as I understand, one-third of the delegates to the 1776 meeting were thirty-three years of age or younger, it would be appropriate if at least a third (preferably one-half) of the delegates to the proposed meeting in 1976 be thirty-three or less. One simple way to do this, of course, would be to have each region—establishing a regional basis for the meeting would have the great advantage of crossing national boundaries—select two representatives, one over thirty-three, the other thirty-three or younger. This would further tend to associate the Declaration of Interdependence with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Declaration of Independence, which is highly to be desired.

I am carefully avoiding any discussion here of what human values are, not only because I am not qualified to voice any ideas on so immensely difficult a subject, but because such consideration would be a principal purpose of the convocation itself, as well as of the preliminary, regional meetings. Besides, Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet and retired diplomat, says a little about this far better than I could in his Cornell University Press book *Claude Lévi-Strauss: an Introduction* (page 45, as translated):

"To the pretensions of universal history, which vainly tries to reduce the plurality of civilizations to a single ideal direction—yesterday embodied in Providence, and today disembodied in the idea of progress—he (Lévi-Strauss) opposes a vitalizing vision: there are no marginal peoples and the plurality of cultures is illusory, because it is a plurality of metaphors which say the same thing. There is a point at which all roads meet; this point is not Western civilization but the human spirit, which obeys, in all places and at all times, the same laws."

I would prefer to use the word values rather than laws since the latter is a bit too definite for me, but this is not consequential at the moment. Human laws or human values—the Bicentennial offers a remarkably propitious moment for at least trying to comprehend—and to declare for all the world—what they are. Even to the admittedly limited degree that this is possible, such a statement, leading to a Declaration of Interdependence of all peoples on the basis of those laws or values, would really be the "giant leap" for all Mankind, a far more important one than even the thrilling leap to the Moon.

The initiative for starting this difficult undertaking rests with the scholars, not with political figures. Perhaps the readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR may have some ideas on the proposal.

ROBERT REISS
Arlington, Virginia

* * *

I was delighted to read "Social Change and the Police" by New York City Police Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy in the Autumn, 1971, issue.

A police-public mutual partnership can only begin to develop when police voices such as his are heard over the land. Unfortunately, at this moment, most American police chiefs are tunnel-visioned Neanderthals who can only chorus "Communists, Criminals, and Outside Agitators," or "Give us More Men, and More Equipment" in response to problems of crime and disorder.

I think that THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, in identifying the author of this fine article, should have added: "and an anomaly among police leadership!"

A. C. GERMANN
Professor of Criminology
California State College, Long Beach

* * *

Congratulations on the Autumn, 1971, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. It was very provocative, a feast of ideas.

CHARLES M. BREININ
Buffalo, New York

* * *

The Autumn, 1971, AMERICAN SCHOLAR was a beautiful issue. How in the world did you put together a contributors' list that was so unestablishment (and therefore credible)? A fantasy crosses my mind that if you got all those people together in one place for some sort of symposium, for the first time ideas that

PENSIVE ESSAYS ON GENERAL MATTERS

BY A P FARETRA
SUBJECTS ON ART, POETRY, POLITICS, ETC.
send 3.75 to
BRANDED PRESS
221 COLUMBUS AVE.
BOSTON, MASS. 02116
or nearest bookstore

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A FISHERMAN

—a novel by J. Inchardi—

Sirius Books
P. O. Box 177
Freeport, Maine 04032

Order from the publisher **$15**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are new, right, and workable might emerge. Wow!

JOSEPH WHITEHILL
Chestertown, Maryland

* * *

I found the Fortieth Anniversary Issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR most interesting and informative.

CLARENCE M. COSTER
Associate Administrator
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

* * *

Your Autumn, 1971, issue suffers from a lack of perspective. One would have liked to place before Gresham Sykes, Frank Furstenberg, Hans Zeisel, Christian Bay and Daniel Glaser this question: What measure(s) in your view would give some promise of alleviating the rising crime rates? The response(s) cannot be divined from the articles that these gentlemen have contributed. Would putting this question have enabled Mr. Sykes, for example, to abandon his mumblings about the causes of crime? Would Mr. Furstenberg have counted a bit less and thought a bit more? Would Mr. Zeisel have insisted that we must remake society to bring about justice through equal opportunity? Would Mr. Bay have insisted on being so apocalyptic in equating "violence" with shooting the Black Panthers, with shooting looters during riots, and with our sanguinary foreign policy in Viet Nam?

Mr. Glaser, at least, does try to answer the unasked question. At the end of his piece he opts for decriminalization. Although he does not really elaborate the point, many scholars would agree with Mr. Glaser. I find it very odd that in planning this issue you did not take into account at all the work of legal scholars like Norval Morris or Sanford Kadish. Obviously, you thought that what Karl Llewellyn once referred to as the view that no one could possibly believe that lawyers, as opposed to sociologists, could possibly have anything to say about crime was a truism rather than satirical.

HERBERT L. PACKER
Stanford Law School

* * *

I agree with the substance of Dr. Catherine Roberts' contention [DEBATE, AS: Summer, 1971] that man's attitude toward the creation is part of his ethos, part of his attitude toward himself. I therefore agree with her stricture concerning vivisection of trusting and dependent animals. If a man knowingly maims a subservient lower creature, he degrades and damages himself, showing himself capable of similar outrages to his own species.

The rationalized torture of animals in experiments is concomitant with the displacement of religion by science. The question that arises here first arose when the Royal Society was formed (and the philosophers excluded): What is the goal of science? The scientist at one moment says it is to benefit mankind—a notion that begs a further question clearly perceived by Dr. Roberts: What is beneficial to mankind? At another moment the avowed purpose of science is to further itself, to know for the sake of knowing. Neither of these fits the case.

Scientists owe it to themselves and to the rest of us to examine their motives in relation to a philosophy of life and to study their own philosophic history. Few honest ones would now subscribe to the proposition that scientific thought avoids value considerations; see *both* responses above. The difficulty is to have a good public image (let alone self-image) and avoid rationalization; naturally, an ancient Egyptian in 1971 finds this particularly hard.

These laboratory prophets and humanitarian scenario writers say biotechnics will drastically alter human life. But what self-serving value judgments, what unexamined assumptions, underlie such threats? Should people who sneeringly turn crucial religious-ethical questions over to the nearest Jesuit be entrusted with decisions affecting our future? Indeed, I fear they are greatly to be mistrusted. For, like big business, they easily assume that what is good for them is good for the rest of us. To paraphrase Lewis Mumford, the power that is biotechnical and the power that is industrial are, in final analysis, the same kind of power: the power to manipulate lives, the power of artificial substitution, of mass programming, and of enforced consumption.

It is time these activities were discredited. There are many unexplored possibilities of promoting health and alleviating suffering by studying the delicately balanced conditions under which present forms of life emerged and prosper. To substitute a contrived environment with its premeditated cruelties for a protected natural one with its built-in but reducible cruelties is a risky business.

There is more to the issue than the abuse of monkeys. There is the risk of death to man's image of himself as a moral creature in a natural world with a heritage his children can accept.

JOHN PARKE
Middlebury, Vermont

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Illinois

The Ambiguity of Henry James

Charles Thomas Samuels

In this first discriminating study published since the 1920s of all James's major fiction, Samuels sets out to differentiate between success and failure in "the Master's" art, and thereby flies in the face of certain settled assumptions (e.g., he places *The Wings of the Dove* among James's failures and *The Awkward Age* among his greatest successes). Samuels contends that if one seeks to establish the nature of James's achievement one must look at the heart of the matter: James's moral contradictions. $8.50

"Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire

Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902

Willard B. Gatewood, Jr.

"An entire significant episode in the experience of black Americans is exposed in Gatewood's revealing book. Here, through letters written to 'black' newspapers (their only outlet), are the raw impressions of black soldiers in the U.S. Army during their service in the Spanish-American War. . . . A timely and painfully illuminating work of scholarship." — *Publishers' Weekly.* $9.50

Modern Art and Scientific Thought

John Adkins Richardson

Struck by the tendency of many critics and historians to attest to relationships that do not really exist, Richardson seeks to expose prominent delusions and to describe actual parallels in his examination of the effect of science on art from the mid-nineteenth century to World War II. He arrives at some unexpected conclusions: Cubism, though synchronous with the Theory of Relativity, has nothing to do with it; Seurat's art depends less upon passive acceptance of color theory than upon new notions of reality; Cézanne's painting has no exceptional dependency upon geometrical solids, but, as a historical phenomenon, it has a great deal in common with the non-Euclidean geometries. 53 illustrations. $10.00

Order from your bookseller or directly from
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS, Urbana 61801

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books from Ohio State

Kachina

By John Perlman

The first published collection by a young poet who, in the same year, received an Academy of American Poets Award and a Vandewater Prize. Of his poems, A. R. Ammons has written: "Perlman's strong points are the precise concentrations of image, energy, and word, very fine excesses and surprises. . . . He makes convincing contact with strong feeling at times, a rarity in our age." $6.50

The Private Nuclear Strategists

By Roy E. Licklider

A systematic study of that special group of civilians who, though they remain outside the government, are engaged in the study of nuclear strategy as adjuncts to the official strategic community made up of military men and other professionals in the federal employ, and whose personal qualities and qualifications have assumed, by virtue of the power they have come to exercise, a critical importance in the explosive combination of nuclear weapons and clashing nationalisms. $11.00

The Reminiscences of Alexander Dyce

Edited, with a Biography, by Richard J. Schrader

The first publication of the memoirs of the distinguished man of letters who crossed paths with nearly everyone of consequence in the political, literary, and artistic life of England during the first half of the nineteenth century, and whose vivid reports of persons met, plays seen, and parties attended constitute a rich and entertaining account of a fascinating age. $11.00

Ohio State University Press
2070 Neil Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED